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PREACHER PROBLEMS

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Preacher Problems

OR THE

TWENTIETH CENTURY PREACHER AT HIS WORK

BY

WILLIAM THOMAS MOORE, LL.D.

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PREFACE

In preparing this volume the author has had a specific object in view. That object is to supply the twentieth century preacher with suggestions as to his word and work. The book is not a compilation of matter from works on homiletics and pastoral theology. It is the result of the author's own personal experience in a ministry of over fifty years. During this long period of active ministry he has served some of the most important churches in both Europe and America, and at the same time he has been intimately associated with the public press of these countries, by which means he has been brought into intimate contact with the needs of the public ministry of a very wide parish, and consequently the knowledge thus obtained has enabled him to deal with the problems, considered in this volume, from a somewhat comprehensive point of view.

The author has also had considerable experience in the training of young men for the ministry, both in colleges and in special training classes, and this experience has furnished him with material at first hand with which to treat the educational side of the preacher's preparation for his work. Indeed, the entire contents of the volume were originally prepared as lectures for ministerial students in colleges and universities, though some of the lectures have been delivered before preachers' institutes and associations.

Nor have the form and matter of these lectures been changed in any essential particular. They are now printed

just as they were first written. While, on some accounts, it might have been better to give the lectures a careful revision and also some of the problems a fuller treatment, nevertheless the author has thought that, upon the whole, the lectures may do more good by retaining their original form and matter, and consequently they now appear exactly as they were delivered, when first prepared, except that in some cases the lectures, when first delivered, were expanded by extemporaneous remarks, which remarks are not included in this printed report.

It will soon appear to the reader that the purpose of these lectures is much more comprehensive than is usual in such a work. In solving problems, and especially such problems as will continually meet the twentieth century preacher, much more is required than a few practical hints with respect to the preparation and delivery of sermons and the performance of what is usually understood by pastoral work. In treating the more pressing preacher problems of the present day, it was deemed necessary to discuss somewhat exhaustively such questions as appeared to the author to be of special value. This will explain why it is that some problems have received a much fuller treatment than others. It is not claimed that any problem has received all the attention it deserves. The aim has been to simply help the preacher to solve each problem for himself, and consequently the volume is suggestive rather than exhaustive. In short, the author has had constantly in view just what would be most helpful to the preacher, not what was most congenial to the author himself.

It is not probable that everything the book contains will be endorsed by even the average twentieth century preacher. We certainly have not reached any such millennium as would justify an expectation so remarkable

as this. All the author claims is that what he has written is the result of an unbiased, careful and prayerful examination of all the facts and conditions within his reach; and that his conclusions are based upon a wide experience and conscientious desire to help the faithful minister of the twentieth century in his arduous and responsible work. Should the volume prove to be useful to the men for whom it is intended, the author will be more than repaid for all his labour in preparing it for publication.

It ought to be said, however, that while the volume is intended specifically for ministers of the Gospel, it contains much that may be read by Christians generally, as, in many particulars, the whole of church life has necessarily received considerable attention.

W. T. M.

COLUMBIA, MISSOURI.

CONTENTS

PART I

Problems Growing Out of the Preacher's Personal Relation to His Work

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The Problem of His Call to the Ministry	7
II.	The Problem of Personal Character	17
III.	The Problem of Equipment	24
IV.	The Problem of When, Where, and How to Accept a Pastorate	29
V.	The Problem of a Library	38
VI.	The Problem of the Sermon	44
VII.	The Problem of Visiting	55
VIII.	The Problem of Literary Work	59
IX.	The Problem of Relations to Other Ministers and Churches	64
X.	The Problem of Vacation and Travel	70
XI.	Problem of Little Worries	75
XII.	The Problem of How to Begin a Pastorate	83

PART II

Problems Growing Out of the Modern View of the World

XIII.	The Problem of a Fulcrum	95
XIV.	The Problem of Science	108
XV.	Philosophical Problems	127
XVI.	Ethical Problems	131
XVII.	Theological Problems	140

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
XVIII.	Problem of Authority	192
XIX.	The Problem of Liberty	198
XX.	The Problem of Biblical Criticism	220
XXI.	Problem of Hermeneutics	231
XXII.	Problem of Bible Study	244
XXIII.	Problem of Organisation	250
XXIV.	The Problem of Problems, or How to Harmonise Christianity with the Reasonable Demands of the Present Age	254

PART III

Problems Growing Out of Ways and Means; or, How to Meet the Practical Duties of the Preacher's Position

XXV.	The Problem of Time	265
XXVI.	The Problem of Men	270
XXVII.	The Problem of Women	281
XXVIII.	The Problem of the Rich	290
XXIX.	Problem of Social Life	312
XXX.	The Problem of the Prayer Meeting	318
XXXI.	The Problem of the Sunday School	323
XXXII	Problem of Home Training	331
XXXIII.	The Problem of Societies in the Church	339
XXXIV.	The Problem of Church Music	395
XXXV.	The Problem of Evangelism	352
XXXVI.	The Problem of the Preacher for the Present Age, and How He is to be Supplied	370

PART I

Problems Growing Out of the Preacher's Personal Relation to His Work

The preacher himself cannot legitimately be separated from his work. The two are intimately joined together. Nevertheless, there is a sense in which the preacher, as a man, must be considered before we can intelligently determine even what his work may be. Mental, moral, and physical characteristics must not be ignored, if we wish to study carefully the fitness of any man for the work of the ministry. Consequently, I think it will be generally conceded, by all competent judges, that the personal relations of the preacher properly come first in any worthy consideration of the subject before us. I shall, therefore, begin with the problems which grow out of the preacher's personal relation to his work.

I

THE PROBLEM OF HIS CALL TO THE MINISTRY

It is, doubtless, true that the subject of a divine call to the ministry has been discussed in a way which has frequently been misleading. During the nineteenth century what was denominated the divine call was very often loaded down with superstitions which did much to bring about a reaction which has well-nigh proved fatal to the ministry itself. Nowhere, perhaps, has the formula—"extremes beget extremes"—been more strikingly illustrated than in the reaction which has just been mentioned. From the notion that "sights and sounds" were necessary to an assurance of fitness for the ministry, the prevailing rationalism has practically carried the public mind to the opposite extreme where the divine element is completely eliminated, and where the selection of the ministerial calling is made wholly dependent upon conditions which have no relation whatever to the voice of God in determining the course of the preacher. He is simply governed by the conditions of his environment, and consequently enters upon his work very much as if he were choosing any other profession.

The "call" may not be in a very clear voice to every one who enters upon the work of the ministry. Some natures are more sensitive than others. Some have a more distinct hearing than others. What is a very faint echo of Scripture teaching in the ears of one man will

sound like the thunder of Sinai or the rushing of the mighty wind at Pentecost in the ears of another. We all may have exactly the same experience, and yet that experience will differ in its effect upon the different cases. But as a matter of fact we do not all have the same experiences. Conversion itself is not exactly the same experience to all men. The measure of the impression will depend largely upon the impressibility of the subject, and the outward manifestation of its effect will be different in the child who has been brought up in a religious family and in the Sunday school, from what it will be in the case of a man who has been a great sinner. Whoever cannot discriminate between these two cases can never understand the subject of conversion in its practical aspects.

The same is true as regards the call to the ministry. All circumstances of the case must be taken into consideration, and the experience of one man must not be taken in its whole measure as the experience of every other man. Nevertheless, every man should be reasonably certain that he is divinely fitted for the great work to which he aspires, before he assumes to enter upon it. Are there any marks which will help him to determine this vital matter? A few suggestions may not be out of place before it is even worth while to consider anything else.

(1) Whoever thinks seriously of entering the ministry, first of all, ought to settle the question as to whether he is a Christian or not. Of course, he will be a member of some church. It is scarcely probable that a man would seek to preach the Gospel who does not at least formally occupy a Christian position. But one of the sad features of modern Christianity is that in it all is not gold that glitters. It is to be greatly feared that many, even very many,

professed Christians of the present day have not been born from above, and consequently do not possess any real spiritual vitality. They have names to live by, but are practically dead. Now, it is simply impossible to make an effective minister of the Gospel out of one of these purely professional Christians. Consequently, the first thing to be determined by the man who is seeking a place among those who proclaim the word of life is his own spiritual attitude. Is he really a Christian?

It is not here denied that even carnal or psychical men may attract considerable attention, draw large crowds to hear them preach, and even accomplish some good in the ministry, for it must be remembered that if Christ is preached, no matter for what motive, good will likely be done. But after all it must be strongly emphasised that only the man who is deeply interpenetrated by the spirit of God, or who is a genuine Christian, born from above, and living in harmony with high spiritual ideals will or can become eminently useful in either winning souls for Christ or in building up churches in faith, hope, and love. A purely psychical man may gain notoriety, but only what Paul calls the "*pneumatikos anthropos*" can in the scriptural sense win souls to Christ and build up a permanent ministry for good.

(2) The man who seeks a place in the ministry of the Word should have a reasonable amount of native intellectual force. It is not true that anybody can preach the gospel effectively. There is no other position which calls for higher or more consecrated talent, and there is no other position where there is greater room for the development and use of the highest intellectual endowment. While in religious matters the intellect must never be allowed to usurp the place of the heart, still we must be careful not to discount the intellect, and espe-

cially in view of the particular work which the preacher has to do in the twentieth century. We are living in a marvellous age. Every day brings with it discoveries and achievements which actually startle the most radical progressionists in all the land. We are bewildered at our own advancement in the intellectual realm. This age is the wonder of all ages. Over seven thousand years of man's history are being poured into our twentieth century development. Nor are we satisfied with unlocking all the resources of the past. Prophecy is coming to our help. The distant ages of the future are meeting the inflow of the historic past, and the twentieth century preacher is called upon to analyse and assimilate both the past and the future in the living present of this wonderful twentieth century era. To be able to do this he ought to be a man of supreme intellectual force. However, it is not necessary that this intellectual force should have exactly the same measure in every case. There must be variety here as in everything else. It is no disgrace to be the least in the Kingdom of God, and it is no disgrace to be the least in intellect among the whole army of preachers. Nevertheless, even the least should occupy a very high position. If Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain because he offered the firstlings of his flock, then surely the church ought to give the best men it possesses for the great service of the ministry of the Word. God will not accept inferior gifts, and consequently it is well for each church to look for the best gifts among its membership, and only such young men as have this high intellectual endowment should be encouraged to enter the ministry.

(3) The preacher must have high moral qualifications. These qualifications have been somewhat anticipated in what I have said concerning Christian character. I do

not wish to be misunderstood at this point. A man may be "good," and yet not fit for the ministry. Indeed, his most prominent characteristic may practically disqualify him for any very effective work. Some men are so good that they are good for nothing. In other words, they seem to live in an atmosphere which practically unfits them for the active duties of life among real men and women. A preacher must not sacrifice his manhood, nor his manliness, nor his naturalness. And I mean by this last word his power to adapt himself to the conditions in which, from time to time, he finds himself. It may not be exactly true that when we are in Rome we must do as Rome does, but there is a suggestion of truth in this old saw which may be of value to the preacher who imagines himself living in a world of spiritual beings, whereas in fact he is living in a world where flesh and blood have a very predominating influence.

(4) Physical conditions are of considerable value in determining a call to the ministry. Too many sickly or effeminate men have sought the ministry mainly because they were physically weak, and consequently imagined that they could perform the functions of the ministry without any very special endowment of physical strength. This notion, however, is evidently based upon a misconception of the real duties of the ministry. There is, perhaps, no other place where equable temper and the power of endurance are more decidedly needed. More than half of the minister's troubles often come from his physical infirmities. He is nervous, extremely sensitive, has no power of endurance, is perhaps a dyspeptic, lives under conditions which constantly depress him; in short, he is physically a wreck, and though he may be highly intellectual and endowed with a deep spiritual nature, nevertheless, if his sound mind be not in a sound body

the reaction of his physical infirmities will often practically unfit him for the great and arduous duties which belong to the ministerial calling.

It is just here where many a preacher is wrecked. He cannot endure the nervous strain to which he is subjected by the numerous crosses which his physical condition constantly augments and emphasises; and what makes his case still more difficult is that his very weakness invites to habits of life which tend to increase rather than decrease his infirmities. He is almost sure to be a hard student of books and to confine himself mainly to indoor life. Outdoor exercise is distasteful to him and he, therefore, chooses that which only adds fuel to the flame which is already burning up his usefulness. It often happens that a most worthy, intellectual, and spiritual man is unable to make his ministry a success simply because of bodily weakness and inability to use such means as will help to restore physical strength. While he should, perhaps, never have entered the ministry, he may not be altogether a hopeless case if he will "throw physic to the dogs," and study, for a time, at least, his sermons in stones and running brooks instead of musty books which are never disturbed except by his midnight researches. The whole man is made up of a body, soul, and spirit, and each one of these must be carefully considered when a man is solving the question of entering the ministry of the Gospel.

(5) Another important mark of fitness for the ministry is the irresistible conviction of duty. A man should feel as Paul did: "Woe be to me if I preach not the gospel." This feeling by itself may not be a very safe guide. Doubtless, no one should enter the ministry if he can reasonably help it; and I mean by this that the conviction of duty in that respect should be so overwhelming that he dare not resist the call.

Earnest convictions are essential to any work that re-

quires labour and struggle. It was this that made Napoleon the first the unconquerable hero that he was. He believed that he had a mission, that he was a man of destiny, and that nothing could successfully resist him in his efforts to carry out his plans. So of all the successful men who have ever lived. They have been men of intensely earnest convictions and have always gone forward in their work with a zeal and energy which refused to know any defeat. Now, shall we ignore all the facts of history in the selection of men to proclaim the Gospel of the grace of God? Shall we be satisfied with a mere professional qualification? Must we accept of young men for the most important and sacred work beneath the skies, simply because they reckon the ministerial calling an easy place and one which assures a living? Surely there must be deeper convictions than that. A timid irresolution, a halting inactivity, or a doubting hesitancy are unpromising elements of character with which to equip a man for a robust and healthy ministry. Young men who bear the standard of the cross to the nations must feel that the highest obligations of a lifetime and eternity impel them to enter the work. They must feel that the work cannot be done unless they do it, and that they cannot fail in what is proposed, because the everlasting arms will be around them, protecting them from all danger, while the divine Lord Himself will verify his promise to be with them always even to the end of the world.

One of the most striking elements in Mr. Spurgeon's character was that he believed in his mission. He had no doubts with respect to his call to do a special work—a work which no other man could do, simply because every man has his God-given place, and Mr. Spurgeon recognised this fact in all of his undertakings. Hence, he did not go about his work in a trembling, halting,

hesitating manner; but whatever his hands found to do he did with all his might. The very moment he came before his people, he impressed them with the sublime faith which he had in his mission. He heartily believed that God had called him to the work of preaching the Gospel and that, therefore, he could not fail in the accomplishment of great results. He came before his people in the name of Christ, spake in the name of Christ, asked sinners in the name of Christ to obey the gospel and be saved. No wonder his ministry was a success. Such preaching goes forth with the seal of authority on it, and the effect is just what might be reasonably expected —thousands are converted who otherwise would have regarded the story of the cross with perfect indifference. The man behind the Gospel is a most important element in the Gospel's success, and a deep, earnest conviction of duty must be behind the man, if the man is worth anything to the Gospel message.

(6) In determining the question of a call to the ministry the voice of the church should have considerable influence. It is to be regretted that the churches of the present day seem to have lost their interest to a large extent in the selection of young men for the ministry of the Gospel. The time was when individual congregations seemed to delight in encouraging young men who had special qualifications for preaching the Gospel. Now, however, no one appears to take any responsibility in the matter, and if a young man enters the ministry at all, he does so mainly on his own initiative, and often the church as a whole, where his membership is, knows nothing of his determination. He enters some college or university, and when he has received what he considers to be a necessary education, he seeks a church where he can practise his profession.

Now this is a low view of a very high subject. A young man ought to have the support of his home church behind him when he goes to college, and, speaking broadly, he ought not to go for the purpose of preparing for the ministry unless his home church is thoroughly willing to recommend him and to encourage him in the calling he has chosen. The voice of the church may not always be the voice of God, but it is certainly a helpful indication when the voice of the church is in harmony with all the other indications which point to a special call to the ministry. The Apostles of Jesus Christ did not even ordain deacons to distribute alms to the widows and the poor until the church had been consulted. Much more important is it to secure the church's approbation in the case of young men who are seeking to enter the ministry of the Gospel. Sometimes the church may be a check upon the overzealous impetuosity of youth. A young man went to Mr. Spurgeon and in order to convince the latter of his call, he told Mr. Spurgeon that he had seen written on the sky in big capital letters " P. C.," and he interpreted this to mean that he was called to " preach Christ," but, said Mr. Spurgeon, P. C. stands for " plough corn," as well as for the preaching of Christ. This made the young man reflect, and he was soon convinced that his miraculous vision might not, after all, mean what he thought it did. Enthusiasm is a great quality in a man who seeks to preach the Gospel, but enthusiasm carefully guarded by the members of a local congregation may be a great help in guiding a young man into the way he ought to go.

(7) Finally, an exalted estimate of the ministerial calling is itself a strong indication of fitness for the work. Whoever enters upon this work ought to be persuaded that it is the noblest of all callings to which man may aspire.

No wonder the Apostle Paul should have said "whoever desires the office of a bishop desires a good work." Indeed, there is no other work like it, and no other work that excels it in dignity and importance; and unless the candidate is impressed with this notion of the work he had better, at once, seek some other calling; for without this notion he will, perhaps, throughout his whole life be somewhat doubtful as to whether he has wisely chosen or not. This fact of itself will make him half hearted in his ministry, and will probably finally make his work a failure. The stream cannot rise higher than the fountain. Idealisation always goes before realisation; nor do we usually transcend our ideals in our efforts to realise them; consequently, if our estimate of the ministerial calling is not high, we will generally work on a plane that is even lower than the low estimate which has been made of the work in which we are engaged. I am confident, however, that no one should feel himself called to the ministry of the Gospel who does not have the overwhelming conviction that there is no other work on this earth equal to it in its high and holy character.

The foregoing considerations make it evident that no one should lightly enter upon a work, such as the ministry of the gospel is, without a deep sense that he possesses in a large degree the qualifications which have been indicated. Nor will such an estimate itself in any way be detrimental to his humility. On the contrary, if he possesses the qualifications which have been marked out, a consciousness of this fact will probably increase his humility and sense of unworthiness, for when he sees plainly what the office requires he will probably say, "Who am I that I can do this work?" and this very sense of unfitness will make him strong for the great work which lies before him.

II

THE PROBLEM OF PERSONAL CHARACTER

Some of the elements entering into personal character have already been considered. It has been shown that only persons who have these elements in a reasonable degree should think of attempting to preach the Gospel. But the matter of character is of such great importance that it is deemed well to give it a somewhat separate treatment.

Personality is the aim and end of all power. The whole universe has it consummation and meaning in man. Without him the entire cosmos would still be waste and wild, though order might reign over the chaos which prevailed before the Spirit of God brooded upon the great deep. It was the appearance of man on the sixth day of creation that explained and utilised all the creative acts of the preceding days.

But man must have character in order to be a power for good, and this character, speaking ethically, will depend upon the universe in which he lives, for Christian character consists in the continued dominance of a divine universe. A man of good character is one in whom the universe of duty habitually controls him. A thief is one who lives in a universe where the controlling influences are essentially dishonest. In like manner all other kinds of character may be differentiated by reference to the nature of the universes which dominate them.

Now it is not necessary to suppose that the preacher of the Gospel must be entirely free from any fault. History records only one example of a sinless person. Even Pilate

could find no fault in Him. However, the preacher of the gospel, though not entirely sinless, should live in a universe that is strongly and habitually dominated by good and where evil is lonesome because of a lack of sympathy with it. When a preacher of the Gospel has this predominating character, he will preach more by example than by precept, for the average audience will be affected more decidedly by a living example than they will be by the most eloquent sermons. In my early ministry I had an experience which justifies what I have just stated. A gentleman had been attending my ministry for several years and had never obeyed the Gospel. I finally regarded him as a hardened sinner, and practically gave him up to his fate.

But one day, to my utter surprise, he came forward at the close of my sermon and asked to be baptised that same evening. After the dismission of the audience I sought an interview with this gentleman, that I might acquaint myself fully with his spiritual condition. I was also curious to know what had finally determined his course of action. He frankly told me that it was not my preaching; but he said it was the life of a godly woman in the church whose example he had watched for many years, and whose conduct was such that he could not help believing that her religion was a reality, and that the Saviour whom she trusted was able to save to the uttermost. Many other similar cases might be mentioned by preachers who have carefully noted the power of a really earnest Christian example. A preacher may be as eloquent as Demosthenes, as logical as Aristotle, as philosophical as Kant, and as scholarly as Bishop Ellicott and yet be practically a failure as a minister of the Gospel, simply because his example out of the pulpit makes it impossible for people to thoroughly

believe in him. In such a case it may be truly said that when he is in the pulpit he ought never to be out of it, and when he is out of it, he ought never to be in it.

A preacher must not only have a good character, but he must also have a good reputation. It is freely admitted that one of these may not always follow the other, though as a rule it is believed that in the long run the two will correspond. The old distinction between character and reputation is not without its value, the former being what a man *is* and the latter what the people *think he is*. One is what *God* sees, and the other is what the *world* sees. However, it is probably true that, in most cases, if not in all, the man of bad character will ultimately be uncovered to the public gaze. It is not only true that murder will out, but all evil ways will at some time be exposed on the housetop; so that the minister who has not a good character cannot maintain a good reputation, and yet this good reputation is of incalculable value in order to a successful career. One of the qualifications which Paul mentions with respect to bishops is that the bishop shall have "a good report among those who are without." In other words, he shall have a good reputation, and this reputation shall extend to those who are not identified with the church. The wisdom of this is not far to seek. It is not difficult to understand that a preacher of the Gospel or an overseer of the church cannot influence men for good unless the preacher himself is good. Everything shall produce after its kind. This law is just as applicable in the ministry as anywhere else. An evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit, and consequently a man of bad character or reputation cannot produce fruit unto holiness that the end may be everlasting life.

A brief summary of a few important characteristics

may be helpful in widening, deepening, and extending the influence of the preacher.

(1) The preacher must be honest. First of all he must be honest with himself. He dare not trifle with his own convictions. No kind of policy can possibly justify him in playing hide and seek with what he believes to be right. When he enters the pulpit he ought not to have the fear of man before his eyes. He ought to realise that his message is from God, and that he personally is not responsible for what that message declares. It is his duty to declare that message, whatever it is, whether it pleases or displeases, and in no case must he play with his conscience in order to secure popularity.

I do not mean by this that he should have no consideration for time and place. Indeed, these are very important matters as regards his usefulness. He need not necessarily antagonise the prejudices of his hearers with a message, however true it may be, for which they are not prepared. Jesus said to His disciples, "I have many things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now," meaning by this that they had not been sufficiently developed to receive heartily the many things which he still had in store for them. Indeed they never did perceive the whole purport of his mission until they were endued with power from on high. After the day of Pentecost they did not any longer stop to count the consequences, but told their message without any regard whatever to their own personal safety or popularity. Their message was revolutionary, and consequently it came directly in antagonism with all the prejudices of the people to whom the message was delivered. The true message of the Gospel is still revolutionary, and the preacher who delivers this message faithfully will undoubtedly possess the courage of his convictions, and will

often find himself unpopular simply because of his faithfulness to conscientious duty.

(2) A preacher should be grave, but not graveyardy, if I may be allowed to coin this term. He ought to be an example of dignity, earnestness, and sobriety. But he need not be morose, sour, or necessarily distasteful to a reasonable cheerfulness. Indeed he ought to be the happiest of men, but this happiness cannot properly manifest itself through a coarse levity or an unseemly humour. Genuine wit should not be despised, for, if judiciously used, it may add to the preacher's influence; but the preacher can never be a buffoon, a jester, or a trifler without decidedly impairing his permanent usefulness. With a certain class of people coarse wit is frequently at a premium, but like every illegitimate thing it must finally come to grief, and with dignified, sensible people it is always at a heavy discount. Especially should levity in the use of scripture be discouraged. The cheap puns on passages from the word of God, or the use of passages for the purpose of giving respectability to what is in itself too mean to stand alone, is not only disreputable, but in many cases contemptible, and cannot be indulged in without placing the minister's character in great jeopardy. I mention this matter with emphasis, because I fear it has become a somewhat settled habit with even well-meaning ministers of the Gospel. Their public addresses are sometimes deeply tainted by this illicit use of the scriptures. We must not only not handle the word of God deceitfully, but we must by "a manifestation of the truth commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." But how can any man, and much less any preacher of the Gospel, wish to bring his coarse jokes into the sight of God with the hope that the consciences of men will be seriously affected by such a manifestion?

Let the preacher maintain in his life and conversation the dignity, sublimity, and glorious inspiration of the Holy Bible. Scripture that has been hammered out of shape by godless puns and unholy associations may be largely shorn of its strength when it comes to be used for the purpose of battering down the strongholds of sin and awakening in the heart the high ideals of the religion of Christ.

The power of association is always great, and as there is only one step from the sublime to the ridiculous, it is easy to turn the most sacred things into burlesque or ridicule. This is why the transfer of what is called secular music to sacred songs is always very hazardous. In singing the latter the mind is often turned to the former associations of the tune, and this practically destroys the influence of the song upon the soul. While it may be true that a correct understanding of the whole matter would obliterate the distinction between what are called secular and sacred things, it is undoubtedly true that, at present at least, we are compelled to recognise what these terms stand for in the popular estimation. But however this may be, of one thing I am profoundly convinced: namely, we cannot trifle with any of the things that enter into our Christian life without danger to our Christian development; and certainly it is true that a minister of the Gospel cannot misuse either the scriptures or the hymns of the church without seriously impairing his personal influence for good among the people whom he serves.

(3) A preacher must be prudent. This is absolutely necessary. It is not only true that he that winneth souls is wise, but he must be wise in order to win souls. Imprudence is the rock on which many ministerial wrecks are strewn. There must be no foolish use of the tongue,

no improper associations, no formation of unprofitable intimacies with either men or women, and especially must there be the utmost care with the preacher's relation to women. Without the slightest intention of evil, imprudence may lead to quick and irretrievable loss of character; at any rate loss of reputation, and I must again quote the apostle's qualification that the minister of the Gospel must have "a good report among those who are without." It is not at all needful, in order to the ruin of reputation, that a preacher should actually commit sin in his relation to others, whether male or female; but he may by simple imprudence, or lack of tact and good judgment, practically bring disaster upon his usefulness for the work in which he is engaged. At this point he must exercise self-denial, and sometimes he should exercise this in the highest degree. He who teaches others that the first duty of the person who aims to follow Christ is self-denial, must himself show by his example that he can surrender those things that belong to the works of the flesh, while at the same time he manifests in his life the fruit of the spirit, namely, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance; for against such there is no law. Consequently the preacher of the Gospel who continually manifests this fruit of the spirit is in no danger of any of the laws of either state, church, or what is called society. His life will be safeguarded against all encroachments of evil, while he himself will be a living example of the highest power for good.

III

THE PROBLEM OF EQUIPMENT

Having settled the questions of a call to the ministry and the personal character necessary to success in the work, the next important matter for consideration is the educational equipment which is indispensable in order to the highest efficiency and success. Speaking broadly, every twentieth century minister of the Gospel ought to have a collegiate or university education. Perhaps there never was a time in the history of the churches when academic training was more essential than in the present day. Intellectual activity was never more pronounced, and the demand for this never more urgent. The Gospel is the same for all ages, and yet it is not precisely the same, any more than the man of to-day is the same as the man of yesterday. He is the same, and yet not the same. It is possible to conceive of a sense in which the Gospel is itself in a process of development. Method does not necessarily change the message, but the message may be changed by the method, and often actually is. The way of seeing a thing may to some extent change the thing itself, and this is precisely what has happened with respect to the Gospel. The Gospel as generally preached to-day is not exactly the same Gospel that was preached in apostolic times. Nor is it necessary that it should be exactly the same. Doubtless, it is the same in its essential principles, but these principles may be so modified by modern methods that the message may have a somewhat different meaning from what it had in the early days of the church; and as to whether this somewhat new message is

better than the old one, much will depend upon the manner in which it is presented to the hearers.

But allowing that the message is in every respect, or at least should be in every respect, just as it was when it was first delivered by the apostolic messengers, it is still abundantly true that modern methods are essential to present that message as it should be presented in this twentieth century. It is most important, therefore, that every minister of the Gospel who seeks to occupy a commanding position in ministerial work should avail himself of every possible opportunity for academic equipment. He must seek the training which can only be obtained in a first-class college or university, and without this he might just as well make up his mind to the fact that he cannot attain to the highest position in the ministerial calling. However, let no one suppose that this academic training is absolutely necessary in order to usefulness in the ministry. There is a vast deal of difference between education and learning. A man may be well educated and yet somewhat devoid of scholarly attainments. The Apostles of Jesus Christ were not scholarly, but they were splendidly educated. Their close association with the Great Teacher for over three years was an opportunity which no one can command in these days. They never attended a college or university in the modern sense, and yet they were in a school of the highest efficiency in preparation for their ministry. In addition to all this they had a special endument of the Holy Spirit in a degree, if not in kind, excelling anything that ministers of the Gospel may now expect. They were, therefore, equipped in the highest possible manner for the particular work which they had to do, though, as already remarked, they did not have the academic training which is afforded by our colleges and universities of the present day.

Now it is possible to possess many important qualifications for effective ministerial work without ever entering a college or university. Indeed, there are certain spheres of labour in the ministry which may possibly be better performed by men who are simply self-educated, or who have had little or no academical training whatever. There are still many churches and communities where a highly educated man would not be satisfied to labour. I put it this way, because if he should fail, the difficulty would be with him and not with the community. Some men cannot preach to a people whose acquirements are very far below their own, and yet if an academic education is good for anything, it ought to be very helpful in enabling the preacher to simplify his message and bring it within the comprehension of the common people. It seems to me that is precisely the main purpose of an education, in so far as it relates to the preaching of the Gospel. But it must be confessed that the education of some men practically spoils them for usefulness. They are always parading their learning rather than the message which they have to deliver. They spoil the simple story of the cross by telling it in a *sesquipedalian* phraseology. The best workmanship is that which shows least the marks of the tools. The most effective preaching is that which hides all the chips and smoke of the workshop. I have known a few men who might have been useful preachers if they had never seen a college or university; but these are the exceptions, not the rules. As already intimated, speaking generally, the preacher of the twentieth century must be a college or university man. But let it be distinctly understood that academic training, even at its best, is only a part of the equipment necessary for effective work. The preacher must, above everything, become familiar with the Word of God. He must be a *student* of

that Word. It will not suffice that he should simply read it. There is a kind of reading of the Bible which is either a task or a dissipation, and in neither case does it contribute anything valuable to the equipment of the preacher for his work. The Bible must be prayerfully and earnestly studied, and its richest precepts treasured in the heart. "Let the word of God dwell in you richly" is an exhortation which is of special importance to the minister of the Gospel. He cannot give to others what he himself does not possess. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." If the heart is overflowing with the riches of God's word, then the utterance will be food for the hearers. Indeed, so important is the matter of studying the Word of God in order to a successful ministry that in my opinion no one can be an efficient preacher who does not depend upon knowledge of this Word not only for guidance, but for very many of the very words he uses in his pulpit ministrations. No preaching is more effective than that which uses wisely the very words of the Spirit. Nor does this study of the Bible make it unnecessary to study other books as well. The preacher should have his mind well stored with the richest literature. Especially should he read and even commit to memory the best poetry. He should become familiar with the great hymns of the church, for a verse from these will often drive home a truth with special power. But I need not particularise. The whole field of the best literature should be at the command of the preacher who wishes to be thoroughly equipped for his work.

But all the reading that he could possibly do can never take the place of actual experience. Books are useful, but whoever studies these gets his knowledge at second hand, and this is always subject to a certain discount. But

whoever gets his knowledge from actual experience can speak as one having authority, for what he says would bear the imprimature of actual life, and consequently will not be a mere repetition of what others have said. The successful preacher of the Gospel will value very highly his eyes and ears, for they will enable him to come into contact with the living world, and thereby furnish him with the very best material for the practical uses of both sermon-making and the administration of his ministerial office.

IV

THE PROBLEM OF WHEN, WHERE, AND HOW TO ACCEPT A PASTORATE

After the preacher has become fairly equipped for his work, he will begin to consider the question as to a permanent location. But he ought not to be too much concerned about this matter. The time will come when it will be proper enough for him to settle down at some suitable place where he can exercise his best gifts. But he should not be in a hurry about this settlement. He has been concerned mainly with his equipment for service, and has, so far, had very little practical experience. But, after all, experience is the best teacher. He may have everything else, but without experience he will probably make many blunders. He knows very little about what preaching really is; he knows still less of the actual duties of a pastor. He has heard numerous lectures, and he has read several books on pastoral theology and pastoral work. But when he enters actually upon his ministry he will find that many of the suggestions which he has treasured with so much care, somehow or other do not fit the conditions in which he finds himself, and consequently he then becomes discouraged and sometimes gives up his work in utter hopelessness, simply because he cannot make the training he has received meet the conditions of his new environment. There is nothing strange in this condition, for the simple reason that no one can possibly provide for all the phases of individuality and the numerous differences in environment. Of

course, there are many things that can be taught in the class room, or from the lecture platform, or from books, but when the best has been accomplished in these respects there will still remain a large margin which can only be covered by experience. This fact makes it necessary that the young preacher should be in no haste to permanently locate. He needs to see a little of real life. He has been confined largely to the class room, and at furtherest he has not gone much outside of the college world. It will now help him very much if he can have a year or two in a somewhat miscellaneous ministry. Nothing will be better for him than to hold several protracted meetings. Such meetings will be useful in many ways. In the first place they will give him practice in speaking, which is just one of the things he needs. In the second place they will bring him in contact with the very heart of the Gospel, and nothing will develop the biblical student more rapidly than this blessed contact. He needs to have his lips touched with a live coal from off the altar, and he can find this inspiration better in his earnest struggle to save souls than in anything else. Perfunctory preaching will not give him this divine afflatus. He must get it by an experimental struggle, such as may come to him in the kind of meetings I have suggested. He will find in this new work an enthusiasm with which he has not been acquainted, and this will press him on to achievements in speaking and working of which he has scarcely dreamed. Third, he will also find in this experience a practical knowledge of human nature which will be of great value to him in the years to come. A preacher without this knowledge is at the mercy of nearly every evil influence, and it is, therefore, of the utmost consequence that he should become acquainted with the various phases of human nature, and nowhere can he

find these phases more helpfully prominent for study than in the protracted meetings to which attention has been called.

In the fourth place, he will have opportunity to select a suitable place for permanent location. Visiting various parts of the country will enable him to find a field best suited to his tastes and talents. He should, therefore, guard against one very possible result. He is most likely to select some place where he has held a successful meeting, and this for the reason that the people whom he has served will urge him to settle among them, and he himself will feel inclined to do so because he is already sympathetically in touch with them and acquainted with them. This is the fatal rock on which many a young ministerial bark is stranded. The young preacher does not know that he cannot keep up forever the intense enthusiasm, the high spiritual fervour, and the joyous earnestness which generally accompany a successful protracted meeting. If he should settle down with the people who have been coöperating with him in the meeting, he will soon find himself in a somewhat different atmosphere, and consequently he will neither preach as he did nor will his audience hear him as they did. The result will be that he will soon be regarded as having already spent his force, and will probably at once lose favour with his people. It is very rare that a successful pastorate can follow a successful protracted meeting, where the pastor and the evangelist are the same person.

Looking at the matter from every point of view it is certainly generally better that a preacher should have two or three years of actual experience at preaching in a somewhat miscellaneous manner before he attempts to settle down to a permanent pastorate. However, this

rule, like all rules, has its exceptions. Occasionally a young man may go directly out of college into a pastorate and win for himself a high degree at once in his new vocation. But these cases are exceptional, and must not be taken too seriously by those who are seeking the highest usefulness.

Much will depend upon the place selected, as well as the time when a pastorate is to begin. Many young men utterly fail in their first pastorate, and sometimes fail throughout their ministry, because they are not wise in the selection of a proper location. In most cases the cities have a special attraction for young men. We need not wonder at this. Youth is fond of excitement. A young man likes to be in the midst of the fight. He is anxious to be where life is illustrated in all of its varied phases. But this is the very condition that is dangerous to him. He needs experience, but this experience should come to him gradually. In a large city he gets his experience faster and more of it than he can bear. He then becomes intoxicated with his environment, and consequently ceases to use those plodding instrumentalities which are so essential to the development of character for permanent good. He lends himself to methods which can have only a short-lived value, if indeed they have any value at all. And if he does use such methods, he then finds himself utterly discouraged by the unexpected difficulties which lie in his pathway. His social life is very limited, his next door neighbour is perhaps wholly unknown to him, and only a little circle of the church he serves have the slightest concern as to whether he lives or dies. He soon finds that the dreams which had haunted him with respect to the life of the great city are all delusive, and now, disappointed and broken, he gives up the fight in utter hopelessness.

All this might have been avoided if he had worked steadily up to the city. When Mr. Moody first went to England he was urged to begin his campaign in London, the great metropolis of the world, but he utterly refused to do so. He said that his religious services would be lost in London, would scarcely make a ripple upon the surface of six millions of people. He said he would begin in the provinces and hopefully work up to London. He said his services might deeply impress a small town or city, but he had no hope that he could do much with London until he had established a provincial reputation. This is the course he pursued, and we know what the results were. After a very successful campaign in several provincial towns and cities he carried with him up to the metropolis the reputation he had gained in the country, and the consequence was that the services which he held in London really impressed the whole city. The young preacher should begin in the smaller places and then work up to the larger ones. He should not despise the day of small things, for in these small beginnings he may plant the seed of that growth whose influence may be felt in some of the largest circles where people congregate.

And a still more important matter is how to begin a pastorate. The old saying that "a bad beginning makes a good ending" was never true in any case. A bad beginning may sometimes have a good ending, but the bad beginning did not *make* this good ending. The good ending came in spite of the bad beginning, but the bad beginning had to be overcome, and is always a source of weakness in any effort to build up a good work.

This is especially true as regards a pastorate. A few serious mistakes at the beginning will probably make it impossible for the pastor to succeed. Hence, it is most

important that he should begin wisely, and in order to do this a few things must be constantly and prayerfully observed.

(1) The preacher must enter upon his pastorate modestly and humbly. These are qualities which are always valuable in the formation of permanent character, but in no place are they more indispensable than in the beginning of a pastorate. The young preacher should attempt no revolutionary movement in the church at the beginning of his work. It may be that he sees many things that ought to be changed, but he will do well and act wisely if he lets "well enough alone," at least for awhile. Any radical change proposed is sure to receive a certain amount of opposition, though this opposition may not be publicly or formally expressed. Indeed it is not likely to be at once brought into active antagonism with the preacher. It would perhaps be better for him if he could know exactly how the members of the church are feeling. It is the suppressed volcano that is dangerous. When the eruption does take place, the young man will probably be wholly unprepared for it, and then it is almost sure to be violent in the exact ratio of the time that it has been smouldering. There are always a few people in every church who will praise the man of progressive or revolutionary methods. These people like excitement. They like novelty. They soon tire of sameness. They are always ready for a change. Every young pastor must remember that a majority of every congregation will be found on the side of conservatism. The masses in the aggregate move slowly. It is not an easy thing to bring up the whole church to even a normal, progressive standard, and it sometimes requires long and patient waiting before this can be done. A pastor who has become thoroughly acquainted with his people, and also has

become permanently attached to them and they to him, may propose many things that would have been quickly resisted or, at least, not approved if these had been proposed at the time he began his ministry. In this matter, as well as other things, he must learn to labour and to wait. A reasonable amount of modesty and humility at this particular point will save a young pastor from a possible disaster.

(2) He must enter upon his ministry with unwavering faith. While he cannot expect everything to come to him at once, he should remember that all things come to him who waits. To believe in success is success half won. This faith must not make him arrogant or self-assertive, but it will make him "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." If he does not believe that his ministry will be a success he had better give it up at once and go somewhere else, or abandon the ministry entirely. There is no place for halting, hesitating, doubtful servants of the Lord in the great vineyard where self-sacrificing labour is the only way to permanent success.

An earnest faith will give to the minister cheerfulness, and nothing is more important in his work than a cheery, happy disposition. Virtues as well as vices are communicative. The man who scatters sunshine from his personality will find this sunshine reproduced in his congregation. He will feel its reflective influence upon his own life, and this of itself will be a most helpful element in his pastoral work.

(3) The wise beginning of a pastorate will often assure success where there are even almost insurmountable difficulties to overcome. It is said that the first six weeks of a college student will determine the character of the student for the whole collegiate course. Much more important are the first six weeks of a new pastorate. Noth-

ing should be overdone. Even the preaching need not be exhaustive of the very best sermons which the preacher can command. Let him gauge well his powers, and not attempt to do at the beginning what he cannot improve upon as the weeks go by. Every succeeding sermon ought to be better than the preceding one, if it is possible to make it so; but no one should depend upon a few selected sermons to compensate for many that are inferior.

It is well also to remember that the first year of a pastorate is not a very good test of what may be accomplished. There is always a certain amount of interest in a new man which will not be felt after he has remained at a place for about a year. The old saying that "a new broom sweeps clean" has a very practical application in the preacher's life. For the first year the pastor will be, for the most part, fresh, will not repeat himself very often, and even in his social life he will have certain personal attractions which will somewhat wear out after the people become familiar with him.

The second year of a pastorate is surely the crucial test. The freshness of the man has become somewhat worn and the critics have now fairly intrenched themselves for the chronic fault-finding which belongs to certain members in every church. This fault-finding will at first be *whispered,* and at most it will find utterance in suppressed tones. But as soon as these critics have found enough sympathisers for their purpose, open opposition will begin. This second year is generally the wilderness period with every new pastorate, and during this time, and certainly at the end of it, he will undoubtedly be tempted by devils, if not by the Devil himself. This second year will test the quality of the man, and if he goes through it without the loss of prestige, his third year will be much easier for him, though

he does not pass the danger point until he has gone a little further. If he has still maintained his grounds, his fourth year will be much easier than any that have preceded. By the time he has entered his fifth year he can be sure of his place, if he wants to hold it, and generally this is the wisest thing for him to do. Short pastorates are for the most part a bad thing for both the preacher and the people. Nevertheless, a short pastorate is better than a long pastorate which offers no prospect of worthy success. A protracted failure is always worse than a short failure. If you cannot get on at a place, quit; that is the best way out of the difficulty; but if you have got on fairly well for four years you will generally stay as long as you please, provided you act wisely and well.

The length of a pastorate must, therefore, depend upon the circumstances. Some pastorates are like sermons: they are very long, even when they are short, while others are very short, even when they are long.

But in any case it is evident that the manner of beginning a pastorate is most important, and nothing is perhaps more important in this beginning than the exercise of patience while adjusting one's self to the new conditions, and while the people are becoming accustomed to the new voice and the new life.

V

THE PROBLEM OF A LIBRARY

It has been truly said that "next to acquiring good friends, the best acquisition is that of good books." A preacher should have a well-selected library. This is absolutely essential in order to any worthy success. A carpenter cannot do his work without tools; neither can a preacher do his work without books. They are in a large sense his tools, and if used wisely they will help him to build his own character as well as the characters of others.

But there are books and books. A large library may be a hindrance rather than a help. Of making many books there is no end, and when one has to look through five or ten thousand volumes before he can find what he wants, the time occupied may be worth more than the book he is hunting for, even after it is found. A library should be well-selected, containing just enough books to meet the demands of the owner; and then it should be so classified and arranged, and the owner should be so familiar with every book and the place it occupies on his shelf, that he can find it at a moment's notice.

Some preachers have an abnormal taste for accumulating books. They seem to think that a large library is a proof of wide reading, but this last does not follow. Some men put books upon their shelves to look at, and really very rarely use them. As some one has truly remarked, "the quantity of books in a library is often a cloud of witnesses to the ignorance of the owner." "Be-

ware of the man with one book" has special significance while studying the make-up of a preacher's library. As a rule, he has no money to spend on books that are simply for show, and consequently he ought, as a matter of economy, to keep his library in reasonable bounds. Even if he should be an omnivorous reader it may be all the worse for him to possess a large library. Too much miscellaneous reading is often a disadvantage, just as too much food may be disastrous to good health. Assimilation of food for the mind is just as necessary as assimilation of food for the body; and as the most commonplace wisdom suggests a wise selection of food for the body, it certainly will not be denied that the same care should be exercised with respect to food for the mind. A preacher certainly has no right to dissipate in his reading any more than in his eating and drinking.

I do not mean by all this caution that the preacher may not have even a large library. Much depends upon his needs, and the means he possesses to procure what he needs. He certainly must have a reasonably large library if he would reach the highest point of usefulness. This is the age of book-making and literary activity, though it may be fairly questioned whether the quality keeps pace with the quantity. The press has become a powerful engine for either good or evil, and in view of this fact it is necessary for a wide-awake preacher to keep himself fairly well acquainted with the books and periodicals that are influencing the age in which he lives. A few suggestions with respect to a library equipment may be helpful at this point.

(1) The preacher should, first of all, secure and read carefully the leading books by the leading men of his own denomination. He should, also, take a few, if not all, of the papers and periodicals published by his brethren. This

much is absolutely necessary in order to keep in touch with his own people so that he may understand their needs, their growth and also keep in sympathy with their men and measures. A preacher can practically lose himself to the brotherhood with whom he is associated by simply ignoring their books and periodicals. But this is not the worst of it. He will probably drift from his religious mooring, and may ultimately find himself wholly or partially out of sympathy with the principles and aims of the people with whom he is religiously associated.

This I regard as a very important matter, and consequently I desire to emphasise it with all the power I possess. The habit of ignoring home industry is not at all confined to the religious world. In commercial matters this habit is very pronounced. The average American will pay ten or even twenty per cent. extra for foreign-manufactured goods rather than use goods manufactured at home, though the latter may be really worth more than the former. Indeed, this is so much the case that I have been told by American manufacturers that they are compelled sometimes to invent a foreign firm name to put on their goods so as to make them marketable at all.

The same is true with respect to foreign books, or books produced by writers outside of our own religious associations. Our preachers will read and heartily recommend books written by men in France, Germany, or England, who have scarcely ever had a glimpse of the religion of Christ, as we see it in this country, while books far in advance of these, produced by our own men, are left to mould upon the shelves of publishing houses instead of being constantly used in preachers' libraries. What do Germans, Frenchmen, and even Englishmen know about the religious movements, the religious principles, and the religious methods which characterise our American devel-

opment? It is probable that in some fields of purely literary criticism and archæological investigation our European writers excel even our best scholars in this country; but this is only one side of a very large field which the preacher has to cultivate. Indeed, as a rule, he need not trouble himself very much about the purely critical books in which the Germans, Frenchmen, and Englishmen excel. If the preacher is a specialist it may be well for him to avail himself of whatever will help him in his special studies, but the preacher should be very careful how he becomes a specialist, for necessarily he ought to have an all-round education rather than that which is confined to one or two things.

(2) I do not wish to be misunderstood with respect to the matter of foreign books. Some most excellent works have been produced by German, French, and English writers, and these should be secured and carefully read, as far as may be consistent with the aims and opportunities of the twentieth century preacher. Nor should a preacher entirely neglect to read the works of leading men of other religious bodies. A man who confines himself to only such books as are produced by his own denomination will most probably become narrow in his religious views, if not sectarian and bigoted. Every preacher needs a broadening process which comes through the reading of books which are written in a different religious atmosphere from the one he has chiefly occupied. There are also a large number of useful books occupying purely practical lines which may be of great service to the minister of the gospel in his weekly ministrations. But, after all, the most useful preacher will probably be the man whose library is not very extensive, but which has been selected with great care and with a special view to practical needs. In such a library will be found the leading

poets, a few, but very few, of the best commentaries; also, a well-selected series of church histories. Neander's is the best, though this is somewhat heavy reading and will probably not be enjoyed. But church history ought to be studied carefully by any preacher of the gospel who assumes to be a leader of religious men. Second only to this is general history. A preacher ought to make historical studies a specialty. Facts are said to be stubborn things, and the preacher ought, for the most part, to deal with facts. These should furnish him with the warp and woof of his sermons. But he cannot find his facts if he ignores history. He may let the dead past bury its dead, but he must use the lessons of the past if he desires to be wise in the present, and prepared for the future. Books of sermons, as a rule, should be given a wide berth. They are, for the most part, a delusion and a snare. The same may be said of skeleton sermons. At most, these are makeshifts which serve to supplement laziness. Let the preacher dig out of the Scriptures, his own experience and the experience of others, as he shall find that recorded in history, and he can then make all the sermons he needs, and these sermons will be worth something to hear. If he cannot do this he had better give up the ministry and go to ploughing corn.

(3) Should he have, in his library, any novels? I answer this by saying both *yes* and *no*. If the question is confined to the best classic novels, such as the best of Dickens, the best of Scott, the best of Thackeray, the best of George Eliot, the best of Cooper, the best of Hawthorne, etc., etc., I would say yes. Let him have these and read them occasionally, for they will be interesting to him, and will probably benefit his preaching. He may, also, read the best of Victor Hugo and the best of Tolstoy, if he can stand strong meat and digest somewhat heavy food. But

most of the modern novels which are written for popular use, and are valued and measured by the number of copies called for in the libraries or sold by the publishers and book-sellers, should have no place in either a preacher's library or in his time devoted to personal culture. These novels are not worth the place they would occupy upon the shelves of his library. They are simply trash, and their only possible value is in enabling the reader to kill time, and this is certainly a very unworthy way to dispose of one of the most precious things God has given us. Time is a jewel, and it ought not to be wasted.

Speaking broadly, a preacher will usually work out the problem of his own library somewhat gradually. He will probably not be long in finding the books which he actually needs, and consequently these suggestions can only be of limited value. However, it is believed that the general instruction already intimated will be of considerable service in helping most preachers to provide for their library equipment, and this is all that ought to be expected from a treatment which must necessarily be far from exhaustive.

I cannot close this consideration of an important subject better than to use the words of Emerson: "Books are the best of things, well used; abused, among the worst. What is the right use? What is the one end which all means go to effect? They are for nothing but to inspire. I had better never see a book than to be warped by its attractions clean out of my own orbit, and made a satellite instead of a system."

VI

THE PROBLEM OF THE SERMON

The sermon is the preacher's chief instrumentality in exerting influence upon the people. Without this he is little more than any other member of the church. Other things *may* be, but the sermon *must* be, and should be constructed and delivered with a view to the highest possible immediate efficiency. No doubt good results may follow after a considerable lapse of time. However, no preaching, worthy of the name, ought to wait for results in the future, but should have results follow at once, and where this is not the case, the preacher may well question his methods or his ability to make his sermons effective. Iron must be welded while it is hot, and definite results must be obtained immediately following the delivery of sermons.

This leads me to say that the sermon should have specially that end in view. It may be that too much heat will, to some extent at least, affect the literary structure of the sermon. But this need not give the true preacher any concern whatever. As a rule, it may be stated, with emphasis, that a sermon which is fit to be preached is not fit to be published, and one that is fit to be published is not fit to be preached. Some one came to Mr. Spurgeon and told him that he was much discouraged because he had no converts resulting from his preaching. Mr. Spurgeon asked him if he always expected converts. The preacher answered by saying that he seldom expected them at all. "Very well," said Mr. Spurgeon, "with that state of mind you may be sure that you will have no converts."

It is the man who has faith in results that will have results. It is seldom one is disappointed in receiving more than he really expects. Disappointments come the other way. Our expectations are often not realised, but this is frequently owing to the fact that we only half believe in the work we are doing. He who preaches for immediate results will carefully study how to obtain them, and his sermons will be full of a present salvation.

I know of no greater drawback to a successful ministry than the infidelity of the pulpit; and this prevails to a much larger extent than is dreamed of by most people. Many sermons are prepared and preached as little more than experiments. Perhaps what is said may do some good, but no matter whether it does or not, the duty of delivering the message is discharged, and, therefore, the conscience of the preacher is not disturbed. This half-heartedness is the parent of nine-tenths of the failures of the modern pulpit. To believe in success is the only road to success, and this is especially true of the proclamation of the Gospel. Why should any one doubt its efficiency? Is it not the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth? Surely the minister of the Gospel has no reason whatever to suppose that souls will not be converted any time he proclaims faithfully the message he has to deliver.

I cannot emphasise this matter too much. The keynote of every sermon should be salvation. This is precisely what the Gospel is for, and no man is fit to proclaim it who does not believe with his whole soul that the message, when faithfully delivered, will be immediately effective. Nothing characterised the preaching of the Apostles more distinctly than the fact that they had unbounded faith in immediate results from the proclamation of their message. Nor were they very often disappointed. Very gen-

erally they had reason to rejoice in the same day, or same hour of the night; but the Apostles were practically on fire. They preached with an enthusiasm which was really irresistible. They moved upon men with no thought of being defeated. Their whole aim was victory, and this victory was nearly always achieved.

Another important matter is the text of the sermon. The formality of using a text might probably be dismissed from the modern pulpit with good results. It is possible that the place of the text might be filled with something much less objectionable. But, however this may be, when a text is selected the sermon ought to grow naturally out of this text. In much of the preaching of the present time the text is tacked on to the sermon rather than the sermon to the text. But there ought not to be any tacking on of any kind whatever. The sermon ought to grow out of the text as a tree grows from its seed. The text is the seed, and from this the tree must be produced. It should have trunk, branches, and the leaves, and in some cases it should have flowers. But everything on the tree should be of the same kind as the text. Men do not gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles. Everything produces after its kind.

The true sermon may be likened to a tune on which is written variations. I once heard the great pianist and composer, Thalberg, play his "Home, Sweet Home" with variations. The effect was truly wonderful. While the variations gave variety and opportunity for the display of his marvellous fingering, the tune itself was never lost at any time during the performance. From beginning to end the ear could detect the movement of that sweetest of melodies, "Home, Sweet Home," though covered with a shower of brilliant and effective variations.

So I think it must be with the sermon. Whatever form

the variations may take there must be the steady, unbroken meaning of the text running through the sermon from beginning to end. This will help the thinking of the preacher, and will also intensify the memory of the hearer.

Of course this all means that the preaching should mainly be expository in its character. Really no preaching is worth very much that is not expository. Topical preaching may be well enough now and then, but the staple preaching of any permanently successful ministry must be, in the first place, biblical; secondly, expository, and thirdly, practical. These three elements must be prominent in any sermons that will result in much good. In these days there is a great temptation to the city preacher to make his sermons suitable for the Monday morning paper rather than his Sunday audience. Indeed, he frequently preaches to the press rather than to the people. He seeks to have something sensational, or at least interesting, for the reporter; but this often fails to help his hearers. There is nothing in which preachers make a greater mistake than in supposing that the sensational topics of the week may be reproduced in the pulpit on Sunday. This is like trying to make good coffee out of the old coffee grounds that have already served their purpose. As a rule people do not go to church on Sunday to hear a rehash of the week's topics. They go to church for rest from the very thing that some preachers think should be retold with pulpit variations. The people want help, spiritual help, and not this overdose of secularism with a little religious sweetening in it to give it a sort of Sunday flavour. The people want something that will rest their weary souls, that will lift them out of the struggles of the past week and give them courage for the oncoming battles.

Nothing will do this so well as biblical preaching. The Bible furnishes the very best help that can be found anywhere for weary, struggling souls. To these its teaching is as sweet as honey in the honeycomb. But the teaching of the Scripture must be made clear to the audience. Profound preaching is always characterised by lucidity of statement and felicity of expression. Muddy water hides the shallowness of the stream. Clear water reveals its depth. When Nehemiah and his co-labourers had finished repairing the wall around Jerusalem, Ezra stood upon a pulpit of wood, the first mention of pulpit to be found anywhere in history, and "read from the book of the law of God, distinctly and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the meaning." This is precisely what every faithful preacher should do. He should give the sense and cause his audience to understand the meaning of the Scriptures. Any preaching that does not accomplish this much must be of little permanent value. It may produce a temporary interest, and it may even be highly entertaining to an audience, but it will never penetrate to the conscience and stimulate the people to a higher and better life. As has already been intimated, preaching must have a certain definite aim in view. That aim should always be the formation of true character. This character must begin in conversion and then be built up and perfected through careful training in the church. This training in the church cannot be accomplished unless the converts are fed upon the "unadulterated milk of the Word that they may grow thereby."

As a matter of fact all the great preachers of all ages of the church have been expository preachers. There is scarcely an exception to this statement. It is true that here and there may be found some brilliant pulpit orator who, in his time, swayed multitudes by a sort of mar-

vellous word painting and exceptional eloquence in his pulpit minstrations; but these preachers, though few in number, may be counted still less in their permanent influence on the world. They are pulpit comets, apparently outside the ordinary systems where there is law and order. Hence it is reasonable to conclude that only the biblical and expository preacher can build up an influence that will have lasting results.

It is freely admitted that the temptation to turn away from this somewhat beaten path is great in this twentieth century. We are told that preaching must be up to date, that it must deal with living things, that it must be fully abreast of the times, and that the people will not listen to the old stereotyped doctrines of the creed. All this may be true. But what do we mean by being up to date? by living things? what are we to understand by being abreast of the times? Is the Word of God no longer in touch with the days in which we live? Has this word lost its power, its adaptation to the needs of the people? Must it henceforth be regarded as "a back number," and consequently something else must be substituted for it? This is certainly what seems to be implied in the notion that the sermon must, in some fashion, get away from the Bible in order to be helpful to our modern life. Now this is precisely the rock on which much of our modern preaching is wrecked. In getting away from Scylla it is stranded on Charybdis.

The sermon should not have too much drapery around it. We should remember that beauty unadorned is adorned the most. There are two kinds of eloquence which may be respectively named: moonshine eloquence and sunshine eloquence. If we go out into the fields and woods, or along the river's meandering course, when the moon is shining brightly, we usually say how beautiful is the

moonshine! but rarely comment enthusiastically upon anything else in nature that is revealed to us. But when we go out into the same places, when the sun is shining, we never comment upon the sun, but upon the beauties of nature which this sun reveals to us. We now say how beautiful are the fields, woods, and the river. Precisely so it is with eloquence. True eloquence does not reveal itself to us, as the moonshine does, but reveals the things which its light exposes, as the sunshine does.

It is almost useless to discuss the question as to whether a sermon should be written or delivered extemporaneously. The final decision of this matter depends upon so many contingencies that no one can determine beforehand just what ought to be done in a given case. Some preachers may do better with a written sermon, though as a rule it is well to cultivate the extemporaneous habit. It is far easier to quit it than to take it up and succeed without any practice. Of one thing every preacher may rest assured, and that is that he cannot succeed with extemporaneous preaching without a great deal of practice. Some men will never succeed with it no matter how much they practise. They are capable of writing a good sermon, but when they leave their manuscript they are irretrievably lost. In such cases it is better to write and read. Indeed, if one writes at all it is generally better to read than to commit to memory and then attempt to declaim the sermon as it is written. Of the three methods, viz., reading, extemporaneous, and repeating from memory, the last is to be least commended. Very few, if any, can make such sermons deeply effective. It is possible for a preacher to write certain passages and then commit these to memory, and deliver them as parts of a practically extemporaneous address. But even this is somewhat hazardous unless the preacher has an aptness for introducing quota-

tions from memory at exactly the right time and place. When this is well done it will give power and literary finish to an extemporaneous sermon, but if the audience can see where the piece is tacked on it will at once appear as old cloth on a new garment, and will consequently disfigure the sermon rather than beautify it.

Of course the delivery of the sermon is a great matter. A sermon may be perfect so far as its literary and biblical composition is concerned, and yet it may produce little or no effect upon the audience, simply because it is not delivered with the earnestness and unction which are necessary in order to produce good results. No wonder a celebrated actor once said to an equally celebrated preacher that the preacher failed largely in his message because he delivered fact as if it was fiction, while the actor delivered fiction as if it was fact.

Doubtless it is impossible for a man to assume earnestness in a perfunctory manner. Probably he can practise the art of delivery until he can cover up his deception to a very considerable extent. But I doubt if he can do it entirely. There will usually be the ears of the animal protruding even if the body is entirely covered by a polished rhetoric and a vigorous elocution. If, however, he can have both of these along with an intense earnestness which is born of sincerity and a longing desire for souls, then the delivery of the sermon will always be a powerful factor in the ministry of that preacher.

Can anything be gained by study and careful attention in the matter of delivery? Undoubtedly much may be gained. Remember the story of Demosthenes, how he overcame a difficulty in his voice as well as in his gestures. Long and patient practice will do much in this respect as well as in other things. It is always true that practice makes perfect.

Let no one, therefore, despair of attaining to an impressive delivery of his sermons. Of course a good voice, to begin with, is a wonderful advantage. But a good voice may be abused until it becomes a hindrance rather than a help, while a bad voice may be improved until it will work wonders, where once it was simply a distasteful discord. If you have gifts, young men, try to improve them; if you have faults try to correct them; if you are entirely deficient in certain things try to supply the deficiency by bringing into activity some superfluous power which you have stored away in some other place. This is precisely what is done by nature, and preaching, after all, is most effective when it is natural. If one sense is lost the other senses become more acute, and thus to a certain extent make up for the deficiency. This may be done in the matter of preaching, until by careful training and sensible economy of forces nearly all defects will vanish, while the very best results may be obtained.

In view of what has already been said, is it possible to formulate definitely some characteristics of the sermon which must be more or less present in every effective deliverance from the pulpit? I think we are now prepared to insist upon at least the following:

(1) The sermon must be eminently biblical. It must draw its inspiration from the Word of God. Though it fail in everything else, this characteristic must be present, or else it is not entitled to be called a sermon at all.

(2) The sermon must grow naturally out of the text. Usually it ought to consist of not more than three general divisions, though this plan need not be always adhered to strictly. The main thing is to make the sermon correspond to the thought in the text.

(3) The sermon may be diversified, but it must never lose what has been called "the thread of the discourse."

"Home, Sweet Home" must throb and sound through every movement of the tongue in deliverance, but the variations may be made *ad libitum,* provided these variations add either beauty to the diction or impressiveness to the thought. Sometimes they may be admissible simply for the purpose of resting the mind from a severe strain while the preacher is struggling with the main contention. Variety is not only the spice of life, but it may frequently be the spice of the sermon; but this variety should never be allowed to divert the attention from or deteriorate the predominant thought of the sermon.

(4) The sermon should appeal to the experience of the people. Indeed, it should be forged out of the hot furnace of everyday life. The preacher should know the needs of his people, and he should preach out of these needs to these needs. Frequent contact with his people will help him very much in this matter.

(5) The sermon itself should be red-hot. If composed in the study every sentence should carry with it the impress of divine companionship. Sermons that come out of seasons of prayer will bring forth fruit in almost any climate. But purely intellectual compositions, without the warmth which comes only by personal contact with God, cannot be specially effective in the conversion or edification of souls.

(6) The sermon must be simple in its diction, clear in its statements, forcible and impassioned in its delivery. Cold steel may do for soldiers in battle, but nothing cold will do for an effective sermon. The human heart may be melted until it will follow wheresoever it is led, but it can never be completely subdued by forcible means. Jesus said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." The sermon must use the cross as the magnet with which to draw souls to Christ.

(7) Every sermon should have immediate results as the end to be achieved. The preacher should deliver his message as if it were the last time he may ever preach, and he should in some way make his hearers feel that this is the last time they may ever hear a sermon. It is not necessary to tell them this. Probably the telling may have just the opposite effect upon the people. They will begin to speculate as to the probability of such an assertion becoming true, and in any case they will begin to make excuses within themselves for putting off the matter of decision to some future time. Never raise a discussion of this kind within the soul of any one if it can possibly be avoided; and it may be avoided, if the preacher martials all his forces, without revealing his strategy, and brings them to bear upon the one great object of preaching, and that is IMMEDIATE DECISION.

VII

THE PROBLEM OF VISITING

With respect to this matter no hard and fast lines can be laid down. Like many other things in the work of the ministry, much must be determined by temperament, environment, and opportunity. There is one word which governs the whole ground, and that word is *personality*. The preacher must have an influential personality, if he hopes to accomplish anything worthy of the name; and when this personality is assured, he must seek to exert it in the best way he can in order to the accomplishment of his work.

Speaking broadly, he cannot allow any visiting to interfere with the preparation of his sermons. He must have time for quiet study, for secret communion with God, for devout meditation, for earnest and importunate prayer. He dare not give his whole time to visiting his flock, no matter how much he may accomplish in that way. The preacher's first duty is to his public discourses. If these are weak, his whole ministry will be correspondingly weak; if these are strong, much can be forgiven of neglect in other respects. But if the preacher's pulpit work is defective, if it is apparent he is neglecting his studies, if his sermons show evidence of carelessness in their preparation, and if the delivery of these sermons reveals the fact that they have not been burnt into his soul by the fires of enthusiasm, then it is certain that he will fail in a large degree to meet the actual needs of his congregation, no matter how many other things there may be in which he excels.

It has been said that a visiting pastor makes a fat church; but it may be said with even more truth that a visiting pastor often makes a lean pulpit. This is true especially of social visiting. Many of the social functions of the present day are vicious in their character, and nearly all of them are dissipating, and therefore enervating in their influence upon the spiritual life. They certainly do not contribute to spiritual advancement. They are generally worldly and tend to unfit the mind for spiritual enjoyment. The faithful preacher should steer clear of these.

However, there is a certain amount of visiting which may be very profitable to the ministry. Nor is it necessary to make these visits always distinctly religious. It is possible for even the preacher to be too religious. Paul found the Athenians too superstitious; or, to give a better translation, too religious. The preacher must remember that while his message is from God, it is to men and to women who are still in the flesh. He must, therefore, make his visits human, and the more he enters into sympathy with the human side of those with whom he comes in contact the more effective he will be in impressing upon them the divine message which he brings to them. In short, he must be natural in his relation to his people. He must not talk through his nose; he must not illustrate the Uriah Heep style of religion. Most people will soon detect what is glaringly false in his exhibitions of piety. Indeed, piety is spoiled by any kind of exhibitions of it; it speaks for itself. It needs no emphasis. It certainly needs no exploiting.

There is no doubt about the fact that judicious visiting may be very helpful to the pastor in exerting his personal influence. There is something in the face-to-face contact which cannot be supplied in any other way. He who has

the gift of making the most of this contact has a rare gift for the ministry. However, there are some preachers who cannot make visiting tell very effectively on their work. Indeed, it is sometimes better for a preacher not to visit at all except in case of the sick and those who specially call for him in order to important conference; and even then it will probably be better for him to send a substitute when this can be done without offence. Some preachers have not the slightest tact, even in the sick-room, and where this is the case they had better keep out of it altogether whenever it is possible to do so. But when the preacher can exert his personality to good effect in visiting his people, he ought to do so to a reasonable extent. This visiting will help him very much in the preparation of his sermons. He will learn by contact with his people their actual needs, and he will learn also how to meet these needs, as he could not in any other way.

But all this will require wise discrimination. He must exercise good judgment. In short he must be sensible, and therefore always act as may seem best, as each condition may intervene. He cannot lay down specific rules, as he will soon find these rules useless in the numerous circumstances which are sure to arise. Of one thing, however, he may be thoroughly assured. He must not waste any time in aimless, useless visiting. It is not the number of calls which a preacher makes that counts in his ministry. It often happens that the value of these calls is exactly in the inverse ratio of the number of calls made. If he visits his congregation in a simply social way, his visits will probably do very little good from a religious point of view. He may be as diligent in this respect as Dr. Parker's celebrated Mr. Bodens in "Ad Clerum." Mr. Bodens was a typical visiting pastor, except that he probably perspired more than most of our fashionable

social entertainers. Mr. Bodens was thoroughly in earnest, but his earnestness was mainly expended in efforts to reach certain families about dinner time, where he expected a bottle of champagne to be opened. He has his counterpart in many respects, minus the champagne, in the modern ministry, and occasionally we find a preacher who takes in Mr. Bodens' whole programme.

Visiting of this kind is a dissipation. It is often worse than that. It is absolute murder. It is practically murdering the time that God has given for great and noble purposes, and the reaction upon the preacher himself, as well as upon the people whom he visits, is disastrous in the highest degree to all spiritual development. In view of my personal knowledge of this whole matter, I do not hesitate to express the opinion that fully nine-tenths of pastoral visiting, as it is done in these days, actually produces more harm than good. Not the least of this harm comes from the minister's loss of dignity and spiritual fervour by breathing an atmosphere which is often surcharged with frivolity and secularism. In any case it is certain that the pastor who wishes to do his work, so as to gain the greatest amount of spiritual advancement for his flock, will surely be too economical of the precious time at his disposal to waste it in a kind of visiting which has no higher aim than the satisfaction of the low demands of the social life of the present day; a life which has nothing to recommend it except the empty provision for meeting certain longings inevitably produced by habits of dissipation. But no minister should lend himself for a moment to foster that which has already overgrown the whole body social, and whose influence needs to be utterly broken instead of maintained or even excused by the preacher's example.

VIII

THE PROBLEM OF LITERARY WORK

The preacher must be careful not to become a Jack-of-all-trades. In such a case he is sure to be good at none. It is usually better to do one thing well than to do a thousand things in a very indifferent manner. Indeed, all other things being equal, the strongest characters are those who are devoted to one particular calling. One-ideaed men may be derided, but, after all, they are the men who have moved the world. David said, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after." He not only desired simply one thing, but that one thing absorbed his chief attention; he sought after it; made the finding of it the principal concern of his life.

The Apostle Paul counted not himself to have attained to all knowledge or all perfection, but he says, "This one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." This one thing comprehended the whole scope of his responsibility and work. He reached out after this, he constantly struggled to attain it; it was the one thought of his waking hours, and it was his dream in the night. Forgetting the things that were behind, he constantly, persistently, and enthusiastically pressed forward. His was a great aim, and behind this aim was a great soul. No wonder he wrought more than all the other Apostles combined. He had a single purpose and he made everything else contribute to that.

Now the preacher of the Gospel dare not engage in

anything that will detract from his high and holy calling. When he accepts the position of a proclaimer of that message which is for the salvation of souls he must not allow anything to interfere with his distinctive mission. No man has a right to preach at all who is willing to give his preaching a secondary place, or even to load it down with other things which must necessarily hinder its efficiency. He must make his ministry of the Gospel the one absorbing thought of his life, and whatever he does should be made in some way to contribute to his ministerial power.

This has been the course of all the preachers of all ages of the church who have been eminently successful in their special work. Alexander McLaren, of Manchester, England, is perhaps the finest sermon-builder of his age, and one of the most successful pastors in the United Kingdom. When asked to reveal what was the secret of his eminent success in the ministry, his answer was, "I give all my thought and attention to my special work: I make all my reading and thinking contribute to my sermons; if I do any outside work, even this must, in some respects, react upon my special ministry."

This expresses exactly the true idea of the pastor's relation to what is understood as outside work. He may devote a reasonable time to literary study, to writing for periodicals or books; but he should never engage in any literary work whatever that will not in a reasonable degree contribute to his own personal growth and to the effectiveness of his pulpit power.

He should not enter the lecture field for regular work. He may deliver a lecture occasionally on a literary subject or some subject closely related to his pulpit work. This will give him opportunity to say some things which cannot be made a part of his sermons, and it will also

stimulate him to read and think along lines which may in the end help in the preparation of his sermons. Familiarity with the best literature of the day will generally be of considerable service to him in the pulpit, but he must not expect to read everything, at least all that is written outside of his special religious studies. He should learn *how* to read. He should cultivate the happy faculty which the bee shows in extracting honey from the flower. It does not go over the whole flower to find the honey, but seems to know instinctively where the honey is located, and, therefore, wastes no time in securing it. The preacher may read many books, and yet he may read very few from cover to cover. Indeed, there are not very many books worth reading in that way. Most of our modern books are filled with stuffing that might be omitted to the advantage of the books. But even where this is not the case a man who knows how to read will be able to skip a great deal and yet appropriate all that is valuable. To read all the books from cover to cover would be an impossible task, and yet the preacher who expects to have influence must keep abreast of the literature of the times. But he must be able to find the honey without reading through the whole book. Wise reading is an art. Whoever has not learned it cannot keep up with the literature of the day. This art ought to enable a well-educated man to appropriate the best of all important new books without reading one-twentieth of the pages. He must learn to analyse. He must come to understand what necessarily follows from a particular statement. He must know this as well as the author, and when he does, he need not trouble about the author's effort to convince him. He should be able to turn the pages of a book and find all the salient points in the shortest possible time. When he reads newspapers, periodicals, and books, under

the influence of this method of finding the honey, he will not have much difficulty to keep in touch with the living thought of the age; he can spend an hour in a public library, and then carry away with him gallons of literary honey while others will busy themselves with the flower or with the honeycomb.

But it may be asked how can he attain to this art? I answer he must learn it just as he learns everything else. Of course there are differences in temperaments, taste, opportunities, and aptitudes; but, after all, the difference in men is largely owing to a difference in training. We can form habits that will soon become second nature, and the habit of profitable reading is one which is very much neglected. While it is true that some people have a sort of instinctive faculty for detecting both the best and the worst in reading, still no one will succeed in always extracting the honey, without going over the whole flower, who has not trained himself in this very profitable exercise. We may not always be able to explain our own methods, or even to fully realise what we are doing when we are extracting the honey. The pianist does not take notice of the conscious movements of his fingers when he is rapidly touching the keys. He does not count his strokes; but all the same there is a sort of unconscious consciousness that is going on all the time. A man solves a question in arithmetic without looking up the rule or rules involved in the problem. But, after all, he is unconsciously conscious, if such an expression is allowable, that he is following the principles he has learned. So it is in reading. When we begin to read books it will generally be necessary for us to read them from cover to cover. After a while we may omit much, and at last we may read over the synopsis of contents, and then look up the principal things that arrest our attention, and this

will be all that is necessary in order to appropriate everything that is valuable in the book.

But the preacher should always hunt for that particular kind of honey which he may use in his sermons. Excursions over the fields of literature will be largely valueless to him if he does not cull from every flower that which will help him in his pulpit work. He must not read for the benefit of lectures, or the press, or any other outside matter. He must read for his sermons. He must seek for the honey that will sweeten his pulpit ministry. If he finds something else that can be used occasionally in lectures, writing, etc., etc., let him note these things and use them when the occasion calls for them. But he must not waste his time in hunting for these things since his main object in reading is to accumulate material for his special work in the ministry.

I know it will be said by some that a preacher should be an all-around man, that he should be equipped for any service to which he may be called. But I deny emphatically that this statement is true; the preacher has been called for a special work; he has voluntarily given himself up to this work, provided he has accepted the responsibility of his position; and he dare not go outside of the sphere to which his work belongs simply for the gratification of certain tastes which he has acquired, or to meet certain conditions that may be inviting to him. He must have the courage to say "No," with a downward beat, when these temptations come to him. He must be able to say, "Get thee behind me, Satan; I cannot live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."

In short, the preacher must stick to his guns, and do the work which is specially his to do by virtue of his high call to the ministry of the Gospel.

IX

THE PROBLEM OF RELATIONS TO OTHER MINISTERS AND CHURCHES

The preacher, if he is a pastor, will generally find in his community other preachers with whom he must necessarily have a certain amount of contact. He cannot avoid this contact even if he were to choose to do so; but he ought not to choose to avoid it. If properly understood and wisely managed this contact ought to be of service rather than a disadvantage.

He will find, in most communities, at least three classes of ministers. In the first place he will find those of his own communion. In the most important towns and cities there are several churches of the same communion, and it will be necessary for each pastor to adjust his relations so as to be on friendly and coöperating terms with all the other pastors of the same communion. But strange as it may appear to the uninitiated, this is not always an easy thing to do. Nor is it necessary to assume that the difficulty of the case is wholly inexcusable. Human nature is always weak, and, like a chain, it is never stronger than its weakest place. Self-interest is probably the weakest link in the chain that makes up human character, and this link is usually the one which is tested in any association of ministers of the same communion in any particular locality. Certain rival interests are almost sure to come to the front. Often a scramble for securing places will grow into a storm centre which will ultimately do much damage. It sometimes happens that preachers

are alienated from each other for no other cause than a too vigorous rivalry in an effort to increase respectively the membership of the churches represented. Truly has Burns said:

> But och! mankind are unco weak,
> An' little to be trusted;
> If self the wavering balance shake
> It's rarely right adjusted.

Now all this could be avoided if the Scriptural idea of *one* church in a city was observed. When I come to discuss the subject of organisation I will animadvert upon the evils of a departure from the New Testament idea of the church. I can only say now, in passing, that the perversion of the Scriptural idea is the parent of almost manifold evils, and among these evils may be mentioned that of the jealousy we are considering. However, until this evil is remedied, it will be necessary for pastors to exercise great care with respect to the matter now under consideration, as well as with respect to many other things that grow out of the weakness of human nature.

A second class of preachers, with whom the pastor will probably come in contact, is made up of those who belong to other communions, but who are, nevertheless, in a general way friendly to the pastor whose relations we are now considering. The latter will find these preachers, for the most part, courteous and even sympathetic with respect to his work. Indeed, he will often find them not so much of a thorn in his flesh as the pastors of his own communion. This arises from the fact that family and tribal feuds are always the bitterest. Jealousies within the household are the worst of all jealousies. It is well, however, not to place too much reliance upon certain phases of Christian union. There are at least three of

these phases which need to be well understood in order that they may be dealt with in a wise manner.

There is, first, what I may call conventional Christian union. This union has very little if any depth. It is purely an outside matter. It is an effort to keep up appearances. It is a sort of moonlike exhibition of the real thing. It shines by the borrowed light of that which is genuine.

This will be frequently met, and I am free to confess that even this conventional courtesy is better than the fighting spirit which sometimes characterises the preachers of a community. No one ought to carry his denominationalism so far as to illustrate in actual life the spirit of the two churches described by Holmes in his novel entitled "Elsie Venner." The Doctor pictures two churches in a New England village. One of them is Calvinistic and the other Arminian, and the spirit of the fighting pastors is finally inparted to the weather vanes of these respective churches until they peck at each other across the valley by which they are separated. Of course even conventional courtesy is better than this audacious pugilism.

A second kind of Christian union may be denominated platform union. This shows itself on public occasions where preachers are gathered together on the same platform. On such occasions it is a very common thing for each speaker to flatter all the rest of those who are present, and then say that Christian union is just the thing, and that he is ready to do everything in his power to promote it. But this union lasts no longer than the public meeting which has called it forth. It is really little more than a pretence, and is not worthy to be characterised by the term Christian. It is simply platform union, and is no wider than the platform occupied by the preachers who are then on it.

This kind of union manifests its true nature when there is an effort at coöperation among the different denominations in some religious enterprise. Its distinctive and unreal character is revealed usually without much obscurity when there is an effort to hold what are called union evangelistic services. It is a curious and very suggestive fact that the spirit of union will pervade such meetings and all things will go on well enough until some one introduces a suggestion with respect to method or principle which is contrary to that which has become stereotyped with those who represent the different denominations. As long as the services are conducted in harmony with the usually accepted manner of dealing with the unconverted, the meetings will probably continue to be harmonious. But if some one has the courage to call attention to apostolic methods and principles and begins to instruct inquirers accordingly, it is probable that this platform union will at once break down even though in the fall some of the preachers should be severely wounded. If there is anything more than another that is likely to be a disturbing element in these union evangelistic services it is the insistence upon following apostolic precepts and examples. This is something that platform union cannot stand. Things will go smoothly enough as long as they are simply echoes of a stereotyped usage. But there must be no departure from this usage. In other words, this kind of union is always "heads I win, tails you lose." It is entirely one-sided, and makes no recognition of the fact that in such a coöperation there ought to be an equality of privilege granted to all who are striving to work together.

There is, however, a third kind of union which is to be highly commended. The preacher will come in contact with the real thing, as well as with the false kinds, to

which I have called attention. This real Christian union should be highly commended, and every faithful minister of the Gospel ought to be heartily in favour of it, and work earnestly for its success. But this union can never be realised unless there is a willingness all round to concede to others the same rights that we claim for ourselves. Every preacher has a right to think, speak, and act for himself without any obtrusive outside interference. Indeed, every manly preacher will claim this much for himself, and this claim ought to be conceded at once by every other person. But what he claims for himself he should readily grant to all with whom he may come in contact. This, however, is just what he will sometimes not do, but this he must do if he expects to coöperate in any successful effort in Christian union. A union that is not based upon this liberty is not worth contending for, and would not stand even if it could be temporarily secured. Nothing will stand the wear and tear of individual manhood and womanhood that does not grant the liberty to differ, even though it denies the right to divide.

The preacher, however, will meet a third class of preachers and churches in almost every community with whom he can have little or no active fraternal relations. It is a pleasant reflection that this class is growing less and less every year, but in most communities it still has considerable prominence. There are preachers who continue to illustrate the spirit of the old deacon's prayer, when he said, "Lord, have mercy upon me and my wife, my son John and his wife, us four and no more. Amen." Where these men are met with, where the churches they serve sympathise with their exclusiveness, it is perhaps best to let them alone in their narrow, pent-up, religious Uticas, as it is generally impossible to make anything out of them better than what they are, viz.,—the slaves of

sectarianism. "Ephraim is joined to his idols; let him alone." Where the true preacher of the Gospel comes in contact with this kind of religious narrowness he can hope for nothing better from it than secret, if not open, opposition. There are some men so little that they cannot contain the great broad spirit of the religion of Christ; they seem to be compelled by the smallness of their manhood to occupy the narrow limits they do. If a large and generous thought were to take possession of their craniums the result might be disastrous, and this fact ought to make Christians of a higher pattern charitable toward these unfortunate little men. You should treat them with the utmost kindness, and pity them for the fate which has limited their manhood to such a small pattern.

X

THE PROBLEM OF VACATION AND TRAVEL

It is still true that all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. The bow must be unstrung sometimes or else it will become set to the bend. At the same time the bow must be strung when it does its work. The unbent bow will be powerless to send arrows to the mark.

With respect to vacation periods and travel there must be wise discrimination. A few suggestions may help the pastor to decide when and where to go when he is seeking for rest.

First of all, it must be freely admitted that the faithful, hard-working pastor will earn a vacation whether he takes it or not. There is perhaps nothing more trying on the constitution than the constant strain which comes with the earnest administration of pastoral duties. The preaching from the pulpit is perhaps the least of his troubles. If he is well equipped for this work, it will generally be a pleasure rather than a cross to preach. Indeed, the man who does not take delight in his pulpit ministrations should seek some other work, for he is evidently filling the wrong place. It is not meant by this that pulpit work is without any anxieties, or is not associated with arduous labour. No one will succeed as a preacher in any high degree who does not really agonise over his sermons. He must not only pray, but he must think; not only think, but he must throw his whole being into his thinking, until every vein and artery and every nerve of his body is in profound sympathy with and deeply affected by the mental

struggle. It is only out of such agonising that great sermons are produced.

Nevertheless, this kind of work is, after all, a real pleasure to the man who has cultivated a taste for it. The pleasure does not come while the work is a task; it comes bountifully and even gloriously when the work is joyfully accepted as a necessary condition to anything like effective service in pulpit ministration. The same cannot be said of other work which the pastor has to do. Some of this work may be also a pleasure, when the habit of the work has been firmly established. But there is considerable wear and tear from unexpected conditions, and consequently it is impossible to establish a definite habit with respect to these. It is just here where the bow needs to be unbent. A little vacation from the cares and anxieties of the pastor's duties may be a real gain to his ministry rather than a loss. However, it is well for him to consider carefully when and where this vacation should be taken. Time is always an important element in everything, but it is of special value with regard to the matter now under consideration. The vacation must not be taken simply to fit a certain period of the year. The city pastor usually takes his vacation in July or August or both. He does this because he supposes this is the time least favourable for his work at home and most favourable for his own personal comfort and health. But this view of the matter is not necessarily correct. The most fruitful season for his work at home may be the very time when he would personally prefer to take his vacation. "When the pastor's away, 'tis the Devil's great day." In other words, when the pulpits are silent, then the Devil gets in his most effective work. If the saloons were all closed in the cities at the same time the churches are closed the preacher could leave his pulpit

with much less anxiety about the results. But while these saloons are running at full blast and all other instrumentalities of Satan are in energetic activity, the pastor must reckon with certain losses which are sure to be sustained if he vacates his pulpit for any considerable length of time. If it were not for the miserable sectarianism which prevails in our cities it would be possible to meet the exigencies of this case in a very practical manner. If a great many people leave the cities during each summer it would be possible for enough of the pastors to remain at home to meet the needs of the hour, if all the churches in a city would coöperate in planning for religious service. Several of the churches could be closed without any special injury to the cause of Christ, and there would be certain gains from such coöperation of religious forces.

But no one should expect any such religious millennium to be inaugurated and become general within the near future; consequently preachers must plan for their vacation without regard to such a state of things as has been intimated. Of course the time and place for vacation must be more or less a question which can only be decided by the circumstances of the case. A sane judgment and a sanctified purpose will usually be sufficient to determine when and where the vacation shall be taken.

There can be no doubt about the value of travel, both for rest and information, if the travel is wisely planned with respect to both the time to be occupied and the particular object which is had in view. If change is rest, then travel is the best way to secure that rest, provided the movements from place to place are made leisurely and without nervous excitement. But this point must be guarded with great care or else the vacation will not bring with it the remuneration which is sought. When travel becomes a labour and a worry, then it should be given up at once,

even though it may be productive of some good results from an educational point of view. But there is no reason why the educational feature should be loaded down with excessive haste and all of its attendant evil consequences.

Some pastors spend their vacation in Europe. They have about two months, and at most three months, from the time they leave home until they expect to return again. But they undertake to do too much after they have crossed the Atlantic. Those who speak only the English language should not even attempt to go to Paris the first time they visit Europe. They should spend their whole time in the United Kingdom. Much of this time should be spent in Wales, a country which is often entirely skipped by American travellers; and yet, it is the most interesting country in many respects to be found anywhere in Europe. If it is desirable to see old castles and monuments of the past, they will be found there as they can be found nowhere else. If one wishes to commune with nature in some of her most attractive forms and life-giving conditions, then Wales is the country to visit, especially during the months of July and August. There are bits of scenery which surpass anything to be found in Switzerland in exquisite beauty, while the grandeur of some of the mountain views will take a very high rank. During the summer season Nature will be found in her loveliest moods, and the tired pastor will constantly breathe the very atmosphere that will give him helpful rest.

If, however, a visit must be made to the Continent, then the preacher should make his way at once to Switzerland, stopping neither at Paris nor any other large city. A month in Switzerland from the middle of July to the middle of August will be worth, for recreation purposes, a year in European cities. He should see these cities if possible, but not on his first visit. Let that visit be

a tonic, and this cannot be found anywhere so well as on the ocean, or in Wales, Scotland, or Switzerland.

Travel may be a waste of both money and energy. After living in Europe eighteen years, and studying carefully the advantages and disadvantages of travel in that country, I have reached the conclusion that the disadvantages largely outweigh any benefit that may be derived. This is specially true of Americans who spend their summers in Europe. They spend an enormous amount of money, while the information they obtain is so crudely digested that very little of permanent value can be claimed for it. The rush from place to place, the bird's-eye view which is generally the only view possible, and the weariness to the flesh which is sure to follow the overstrained exertions, all tend to make the travel contribute little or nothing to any really valuable end. This ought not to be so, and it need not be so; but it *is* so, in a large majority of cases. It is far better to see fewer things and visit fewer places than to undertake to cover so much territory without accomplishing anything in a satisfactory manner. As no definite, ironclad rule can be formulated for the government of vacations the whole matter must be decided by the exercise of what we call common sense. This will be quite sufficient if a preacher has a good stock of it on hand; but if he has not, it is probable that no special instruction will be of much benefit to him. Nevertheless, the suggestions I have made ought to be helpful, at least in some degree, to all those who are willing to be helped by the experience of others. However, the final test as to what may best be done in any given case must be the result of each preacher's own experience.

XI

PROBLEM OF LITTLE WORRIES

The preacher is fortunate if he have no big worries to try his patience. However, as a matter of fact, big worries do not usually try one's patience as much as little worries do. There was a great deal of human nature in what a preacher friend of mine once said on a very trying occasion. He was in the habit of visiting once a month a certain congregation, and usually held a service on Saturday afternoon. A dapper little preacher of the town frequently attended these Saturday services, and usually took notes of the sermon preached, and would then unfavourably criticise the sermon at his subsequent Sunday morning service. This finally became a great annoyance to my brother and he determined to put a stop to it. One Saturday, just as he began his sermon, this little preacher came in, took his seat, opened his note-book, and began to write. My brother was describing the crosses, trials, vexations, and worries with which we have to contend. He finally said there are some worries very hard to bear. Said he, "I can bear the reflection that sometime I may be destroyed by a lion, the king of the forest, or some other majestic beast of prey; but," said he—at the same time pointing his finger directly at the little preacher, who was scribbling notes on the sermon, "the thought of being bitten to death by mosquitoes is simply intolerable." The little preacher took the hint, closed his note-book, and made his departure as quickly as possible, and this was the last time he ever made his appearance when my brother was preaching.

This expresses very clearly the idea I am aiming to emphasise. It is the little foxes that spoil the vines; it is the little worries that are intolerable, and therefore often destroy the whole nervous system of the preacher. He needs to carefully guard himself against this mosquito plague. The large things he can manage, even though they should be of a very disturbing character; but a little mosquito worry will often keep a preacher awake for the entire night. It may be well to classify some of these worries so that the preacher can deal with them as they may come up in his experience. The following will be sufficient for my present purpose:

(1) *Worries of the Imagination.* Perhaps nine-tenths of our worries are not real at all, at least have no real foundation. They are for the most part the result of a disordered mind. The preacher is himself very often to blame for the very troubles which are preying upon both his health and his usefulness. He imagines many things that have no actual existence. He hears some side remark which he construes as unfavourable to himself, or he interprets the manner of Mr. Jones when they last met as an indication of unfriendliness. He suspects Mr. Brown is seeking to undermine his influence, and he has become greatly alarmed because, at the last sewing society, certain women criticised the new bonnet of his wife. Of course, these are little worries, but they worry all the same; they may be mosquito bites, but they leave very distinct marks on the preacher's nervous system, and there is really no reason for them. Anticipating evil, or looking out for it, is precisely the best way to invite it to come. Jesus taught the true doctrine when he said sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. It is an old but true saying that he who looks for ghosts, while going through a graveyard, is sure to find them. Our eyes generally

see what is in our hearts; hence the new version tells us that the heart has eyes, and this practically gives a new meaning to several important passages of Scripture.

(2) *Some real worries that cannot be helped.* Every disturbing cause does not come from a disordered imagination. There are some *real* little foxes that are constantly spoiling the vines. But this ought not to be allowed. There are certain things we cannot possibly help, and where this is the case we ought not to worry over them. We cannot make one hair white or black, and we ought not, therefore, to fret ourselves because our hair is not the colour we wish it to be. Neither can we add one cubit to our stature, therefore we ought not to worry because we are not as tall or as short as we would like to be. We cannot control the weather, and it is, therefore, folly to find fault with it, and to fret because it is raining when we do not wish it to rain. Better by far to adopt the sentiment of Longfellow, in his "Birds of Killingworth," when he suggests that, when it is raining, the best thing we can do is to "just let it rain."

(3) There are, however, many disturbing things which can be helped, and there is certainly no justifiable reason for worrying over these. Whatever can be helped ought to be helped. Instead of spending our time and strength in fretting, we ought to go to work at once and remove the disturbing element. If it is in our power to do so, we at once become responsible for the continuance of the evil, no matter what it may be, and consequently our fretting is entirely useless, since we may at once remove the cause. We fret over our neglect of duty, our failure to meet an emergency. But this is our own fault, and fretting about it is the most useless of all exercises in which we can engage. The true philosophy is to correct

the evil habit, and then there will be no reason for fretting at all.

It will be seen from the foregoing considerations that when we have subtracted the things of the imagination, the things that we cannot help, the things that we can help and ought to help, from our worries, there remains very little over which we may reasonably worry; nevertheless, it is a fact, in the experience of most persons, that their usefulness as well as their health is often destroyed by worries which ought not to have any place at all in their experience. The preacher especially ought to be free from them. He needs all the strength he can command for his great work, and he cannot, therefore, afford to spend his strength in the unprofitable business of fretting. It is not work, but worry that kills; and this worry is generally from causes which ought not to influence us in the slightest degree whatever. The preacher often drives refreshing sleep entirely away by entertaining his worries after he has retired for rest. This, of all things, must be avoided. Be sure when you retire at night to leave with your clothes all the worries of the day. Never take any of these worries into bed with you. They may not be strange bedfellows, but they will be disturbing bedfellows, and will often drive sleep away entirely, when it is just the thing you most of all need. A mother gave this advice to her son: said she, "Never take more to your heart than you can kick off at your heels." This may not be the most elegant way to state the matter, but it certainly expresses a vital truth. The phraseology might be changed a little so as to meet exactly the case just now under consideration. Let the advice read as follows: "Never take on more worries during the day than you can kick off with your clothes at night."

On the subject now before us, it will be well for every

preacher to read an essay by the country parson, entitled, "Concerning Two Blisters of Humanity." These blisters are petty malignity and petty annoyance. Some of our worries come from the malignant actions of those with whom we are associated. This is often a very small part of our worries. When we stop to think about it, in our cooler moments, we will find that such worries are really not worth a moment's consideration. But all the same any petty malignity will probably fret us unless we take the precaution which I have already indicated. If we will put it under its proper class and treat it in a sensible manner it will soon have little or no influence upon us; while at the same time it will probably bring great disappointment to the people who are never so happy as when they are making other people miserable. Indeed, this is a very important statement of the case. The fable of the frogs and the boys is illustrated very often in real life. What is fun for those who are acting the malignant part is misery to those who are the recipients of the malignant favours. The best way to act so as to disappoint these people is by paying no attention whatever to their attacks. Leave them to sweat in their own folly, and this if anything will bring them to their senses; and at any rate will bring them to cease troubling you. Nothing will take the mean disposition out of malignant souls sooner than the consciousness that their stings are not felt by those for whom they are intended. By noticing the sting, you at once encourage the stinger. You may kill off the latter by refusing to regard with any consideration the former.

There is another reason why you should not fret over these petty malignant attacks. You should remember that what is pain to you may be a great pleasure to your neighbour. Why not cultivate a benevolent disposition and

afford him all the pleasure you can? It is true, he will probably not be thankful to you for this self-abnegation; but no matter for this if he really enjoys it. You are expected to live for others, and if your little disappointments intensify the happiness of your neighbours, this itself ought to half reconcile you to accept the disappointments without complaint. You have failed in some important plan you had devised. Now if you will simply remember that your discomfort is the happiness of several quondam friends, then you ought, at least, to consider that even misfortune has its compensation. Someone has been speaking evil of you. Never mind that. Do not forget that when he is talking about you he is letting other people alone. Is not this what Christ meant when He said to his disciples, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

There is another class of people who simply *annoy* you. You realise that there is nothing malignant in their conduct. But all the same they stick pins in you, and when this is done you are almost sure to flinch; but if you could just remember that when they are sticking these pins in you, they are persuaded that they do it for your good, then you might be more gratefully reconciled to the infliction.

In many cases these dear souls are guilty of this petty annoyance with the high purpose in view of educating you with respect to some things wherein you are deficient. Perhaps at your Lord's Day service you were not as happy as you might have been. Indeed, you felt the burden of partial failure yourself, and perhaps you are grieving over this very fact, when one of the members of your

church calls to see you and talks the matter over with you. He is, doubtless, perfectly sincere in his desire to do you good. He thinks he knows what will help you. At any rate, he is not economical of advice. He tells you plainly how mortified he was at your indifferent sermon, and especially as he had invited a particular friend to hear you on that occasion. This brother, no doubt, is just as friendly in his advice as the young married woman was in what she said to her husband at the close of his first sermon after the return from their bridal tour. A very large audience was present, many coming out of curiosity to see the new bride. The preacher was a little embarrassed, and upon the whole did not do himself justice, and probably most preachers would have the same experience. The husband and wife walked home together, and soon after they had fairly started the wife said, "Husband, you did not preach well to-day; I was almost mortified at your failure." The husband was deeply pained at this unexpected criticism of his wife. He replied by saying: "I know that I made a failure, but I did not expect *you* to tell me of it." Nothing further was said. When they reached their home the husband took a seat on one side of the room and the wife on the other. Silence like a spectre brooded over the still and pulseless air. Not a word was spoken for several minutes. At last the wife could stand the pressure no longer, and, womanlike, she went over to her husband, put her arm around him, and drawing him to her heart, she said: "My dear, anyway you are sweet if you are not smart." "Yes," said the husband, "I am a sweet fool."

Now no one will question that the wife meant well in this case, but at the same time it must be evident to every one that her conduct was very annoying to her husband under the circumstances.

This mistaken kindness, or rather misplaced kindness, is often very annoying, though you are compelled to believe that it is bestowed with the very best intentions. The preacher must become hardened to these untimely criticisms, or else he will go home many a time to sit in a lonely corner of his room, where he will brood in silence on what some one has said to him with no other purpose than to help him in his work. He must learn how to meet these little worries, and when he has learned this lesson, he will come to understand that they are little more than the gnat on the ox's horn and ought not to hinder him very seriously in the great work which he has to do.

XII

THE PROBLEM OF HOW TO BEGIN A PASTORATE

"BEGIN as you can hold out," is not a bad motto, if it is not interpreted in a too literal sense. The pastor should certainly aim to make a good impression at the start. Much will depend upon this. While he is new to his congregation the minds of his hearers will probably be in a critical attitude towards him, and, consequently, it is all-important that his first sermons should have special care in both their preparation and their delivery. First impressions are generally the most lasting, and this fact emphasises the importance of beginning a ministry so that it will be as free as possible from unfavourable criticism. First things are always important. The first five minutes of a sermon is altogether the most crucial part of the sermon. Just here is where many preachers fail. They stumble along over the first five minutes as if they were feeling their way in the dark, and the consequence is the hearers make up their minds that the sermon will not amount to much, and often withdraw their attention, so that it is next to impossible to elicit their interest again, even though the sermon should finally prove to be excellent in every respect. The preacher never recovers from that first five minutes' impression, however great his sermon may be from that time to the close.

The same is true of the first few weeks of a new pastor. These are crucial weeks. Every word and every action of the preacher is carefully studied by his people, and a

bad impression at this time will probably have its influence throughout his ministry at that place, no matter how long he may remain.

At the same time he must not overdo the side of excellence. He should begin as he can hold out. Some pastors deliver their very best sermons during the first few weeks of their ministry at a place. This is a mistake, as I have already intimated in a previous lecture. It is far better to preach average sermons, unless the pastor's high aim is to make every sermon he preaches the best. This is a fine idea, but probably no one ever attains to it. Some sermons will be inferior to others, even when the best efforts of the preacher have been used to make all of them rank among the best. Assuming that this will be the case with every pastor, it is well for him who is just beginning a new work to begin as he can hold out. Perhaps he should use one or two of his favourite sermons during the first few weeks of his pastorate, but he should hold a number of these in reserve for important occasions, which are sure to arise during the first year of his ministry. He must not lay himself open to the criticism that he struck twelve right at the beginning of his work.

Of course he ought to grow, and he will grow if he will use the means which produce growth. These means have been indicated, and need not be repeated here. Some preachers imagine that there is danger of exhausting their sermon material. They might just as well say there is danger of exhausting the Bible, there is danger of exhausting nature, there is danger of exhausting human experience. There is danger of exhausting the energy, the patience, and even the conscientious devotion to earnest study, but no danger whatever of exhausting sermon material. The more sermons preached by a well-equipped, conscientious student, the more new sermons

he can preach. Instead of wondering what shall be his theme for the next sermon he will constantly be perplexed to decide among the many things that are pressing upon his attention. His difficulty will not be sermon material, but sermon *time*. He will feel the need of preaching every day, and sometimes every hour, in order to tell his people what he wishes to say to them.

Of course this is somewhat different in the case of young men. They have not the resources to draw upon that older men have. Nevertheless, it is important for even young men to understand that every well thought out sermon is seed sown from which a dozen other sermons may spring. As a matter of fact, sermons ought to grow in a sort of geometrical progression, and they will grow in this manner if everything the preacher reads and does is made to contribute to the one purpose of his life, viz., the augmentation of power in his ministry.

But there are other things besides the sermons which must be carefully managed during the first few weeks of a pastorate. Much will depend upon the preacher's attitude towards his official boards and his congregation as he meets them and has conference with them. No specific rule can be given for the pastor's guidance in respect to this matter. But, speaking broadly, he should always and everywhere aim to be natural, to be his real self. Frankness, if not carried to excess, will always win good opinions. People like to be taken into your confidence. As a rule, you can trust them with respect to all matters that concern your personal relations to them. Of course the preacher need not empty himself to every one whom he meets. He should hold something in reserve. The advice of Burns to his young friend should often be appropriated by the minister of the Gospel:

"Aye free, off han' your story tell
When wi' a bosom crony;
But still keep something to yoursel'
Ye scarcely tell to ony.
Conceal yoursel' as weel's ye can
Frae critical dissection;
But keek through every other man,
Wi' sharpen'd, slee inspection."

The preacher should be extremely careful not to animadvert unfavourably upon the habits, customs, and characteristics of the people with whom he is associated. The citizens of every little town are jealous of their town's reputation, and will usually resent any criticism which has the appearance of underestimating the high opinion which the citizens have of themselves. Better let them enjoy their self-complacency, though it may seem altogether unreasonable to you. Every crow thinks her young one is the blackest. This is undoubtedly a foolish conceit, but generally it is very harmless if no one antagonises it. But it may not be well to cross the old crow about a matter of so little importance.

In any case the preacher should not attempt to regulate all the affairs of his neighbourhood, especially during the first few months of his ministry. If he will wait a little while he may have more success than he could possibly have at the beginning; but when he has waited he will probably find more important business to engage his attention than an effort to convince the people of his parish that they are not exactly "it."

Whatever else the new pastor may do he must not unfavourably criticise his predecessor. He may find things in a deplorable condition. His predecessor may have had numerous faults, but the new pastor will do well to give all these a wide berth. The predecessor will always have at least a few friends who will be sensitive to any un-

favourable criticism upon him, and the new pastor can easily make these sensitive friends his permanent enemies. The word *tact* is the best word we can use for dealing with such matters. It often happens that a preacher of first-class ability and admirable equipment has utterly failed to achieve success in a most desirable location simply because he exercised little or no common sense in dealing with his people during the first six months of his ministry.

How long shall a pastorate continue? The answer to this question must be determined by circumstances. All other things being equal, a long pastorate is the best. No one deserves much credit for a reasonable amount of success during the first year of a ministry at a place. It may be well to partially repeat what I have already said about the first year of a ministry. A preacher's freshness will usually tide him over the first year. The old saying that "A new broom sweeps clean" is especially true of a new pastor. Even his faults will be tolerated during his first year, because his people do not wish to judge of him hastily, and they are always hopeful, during this period, that these faults will not be permanent. Most of his hearers will judge of him charitably with respect to his faults, and as to his virtues, these will be almost exaggerated for at least one year. However, at the end of this year a different state of things will begin. His freshness will have exhausted itself, while his critics will have exhausted their patience. They will now feel at liberty to regard forbearance as no longer a virtue, and they will begin to get in their work.

All this will happen, no matter how successful his first year's ministry may have been. Of course, if it has been largely fruitless, this fact will augment the growing opposition. But even if his ministry has been a decided

success, there will be a few of his congregation who will begin to magnify certain apparent defects, and will probably make the whole second year an unpleasant experience for the new pastor. It is scarcely worth while to mention that this fact is owing to the perverseness of human nature. The preacher may have been a perfect saint in all the elements of character, he may at all times have preached admirable sermons, his relations to his people may have been unexceptionable during the whole time of his ministry, but this is not an absolutely certain protection against unfavourable criticism. It is well known that some people are born in the objective case, and consequently they are inclined to object to anything and everything when that particular mood is on them, and with some people it is never off.

However, it is possible that some of the criticisms are reasonable enough, but speaking generally they will not be made during the first year of the pastor's ministry. It is the second year that seems to be favourable for a thorough sifting of the pastor's qualifications and character. He will now be studied by even considerate members of the church without much respect for delicacy. They will feel that the time has come when he must stand on his own merits, and so they judge of him accordingly. If he can pass through his second year without serious loss of popularity he may reasonably hope that his place is secured. Still, he had better not be too certain about his position until his third year has ended. Indeed, the danger line has not been entirely passed until he reaches his fifth year. If at the end of the fourth year he is firmly established in the affections of his people, he can then with prudence and industry remain as long as he may desire. Every year from this time ought to be a year of growth in assuring his permanency in the place

he occupies. At any rate, the crisis will have passed. In some respects he will have made his own constituency. When he first began he had to become adjusted to the church as he found it, but after four years, if his ministry has been fairly successful, he ought to have gathered as many members into the church as he found in it when he began his work. This new membership may now be counted as a strong tower of strength to his ministry, even if some of the old members should become half-hearted in their support. For the most part these new members will hold the balance of power. Their enthusiasm will more than compensate for the half-indifferent attitude of some of the old members, who are not entirely reconciled to a permanent pastorate.

When this stage is reached the pastor's usefulness has just fairly begun. Of course, he should not leave at a time like this. But this is precisely the time when he is likely to be tempted by offers from other churches. The very fact that he has reached the period we have described is proof to other churches that his services are desirable. Some of these will, doubtless, try to win him away from the place where he is, just because he is beginning to exert his most powerful influence. They want a man who can do things.

By the way, this pastor-stealing is even worse than sheep-stealing, for it is stealing from one's own communion. It ought not to be countenanced anywhere. Indeed, no church should communicate with any pastor with a view to securing his removal, without first consulting the church of which he is at that time the pastor. It often happens that these courtships go on without the church, which is most interested, knowing anything at all about what has happened, until everything has been settled. When too late to even enter protest, the church

is made acquainted with the fact that their pastor is going to another field of labour. This whole proceeding, from beginning to end, is unworthy of Christian churches, and preachers themselves ought to refuse to entertain any proposition for removal until their respective churches have been consulted and their consent freely given.

It now remains to consider the question as to how the pastor should leave a charge when he has decided to make a change. If it is important that he should begin his ministry at a given place in a common-sense way, it is even more important, if possible, that he should leave a pastorate by exercising this common sense in the highest degree. Some preachers, when they find out their usefulness has ended and that they must, therefore, go somewhere else, either at their own option or by intimations from the church, at once grow ugly in their spirit, and even offensive in their manner. This is the very quintessence of folly. It does no good to any human soul, and is sure to react upon the pastor and make his departure the most grateful thing that could happen to his people. They will not only be glad when he is gone, but they will be gladder if he never returns to them again. This should not be the case. When a pastor leaves any sphere of work he should go away making every one sorry that he is leaving. This fact is not a difficult thing to accomplish, if he will accept the situation gracefully and do what he can to make the task of his successor as easy as possible; in short if he will be a gentleman, as well as a Christian, and manifest gentlemanly characteristics, he will win the respect of even those who have grown tired of him, and will, at the same time, conquer the bitterest opposition there may have been to his ministry. No man should ever leave a pastorate without creating an atmosphere entirely favourable to his visiting his old congregation whenever

he wishes to do so. This atmosphere will help him in his new field of labour. If he fights back at the people who he thinks have not treated him as he deserves, he will find that they will follow him with unfriendly criticisms to the place where he has settled. "Forgive and forget" may be a hard thing to do under certain conditions, but this must always be done when leaving a pastorate where you have not been personally treated according to the highest standard of Christian ethics. In all cases you must remember that even Christians are sometimes weak, and, consequently, the strong must bear the infirmities of the weak.

PART II

Problems Growing Out of the Modern View of the World

It has been already intimated that the preacher must adapt himself to the age in which he lives, and that he must also seek an environment suitable to his qualifications. The great importance of this suggestion will be especially felt when the preacher is considered in his relation to the modern view of the world. This view may be right or it may be wrong. At present, it is not necessary to decide definitely this particular point. That there is a modern view and that this is the prevalent view, especially in educated circles, cannot be doubted by those who are in a position to understand the actual trend of things in the modern world. It may be that this view is nothing more than the old view put into modern phraseology. No matter how this is. Phraseology sometimes makes all the difference. In any case, it is impossible to treat, with any degree of fulness and thoroughness, the preacher's vital relations without considering the problems which grow out of what is called the modern view of the world. Let us then proceed at once to the discussion of some of these important problems.

XIII

THE PROBLEM OF A FULCRUM

This problem at once introduces us to one of the great needs of the world to-day. Archimedes said he could lift the earth from its centre if he could have a suitable fulcrum for his lever. But, alas! the fulcrum could not be found. We are still struggling with the problem which perplexed the Syracusan philosopher. We have a superabundance of levers. Nearly every man has a theory as to how the world can be moved from its centre; but each of these theories is little more than an echo from the cry of despair which was raised by the great mathematician when he found that he had no proper fulcrum for his lever.

Much of our reasoning has no trustworthy starting point; and still less has it any demonstrable starting point. Even mathematics takes for granted nearly everything in its initial stages. Its axioms and definitions, for the most part, are accepted upon the principle of faith. Indeed, it is seldom the case that there is ever any questioning of these, even when the science has been practically mastered. As an illustration of what I mean, it may be well to ask: do any of us really know that two and two are four? Doubtless there are those who have satisfied themselves as regards this matter by an appeal to what is called the higher mathematics, but it is probably true that there is not one person in a million who has ever even attempted to work out the problem for himself. But is the answer any less certain on

this account? Is it necessary that every problem of this kind must be solved by each individual before the truth contained in it may be made practical in the affairs of this life? If such a demand should be made upon our time and patience surely progress would be almost an impossible thing; and, furthermore, there would be no room for the exercise of faith which is, after all, the most potent factor in all the affairs of this world.

John Stewart Mill has suggested that there may be worlds where two and two are reckoned as five. But whether this be true or not, it must be evident to all who have given the matter sufficient attention to form a correct judgment, that our acceptance of this method of addition is mainly, if not wholly, a matter of faith. Our mothers told us that two and two are four. Our schoolmasters told us the same thing. We heard their statements with unquestioned confidence, and the result is that all our business is now conducted upon the hypothesis that two and two are certainly four. Think of this simple fact for a moment! Think of its unparalleled influence upon the affairs of human life! The faith which makes this problem a reality in the experience of all men forms the most fundamental of all the factors that enter into the business of the world. Suppose that this faith should be unsettled! Suppose that some wise philosopher should be able to convince us that we are all wrong as regards this matter! Do we not see at once what confusion would soon reign in the commercial world? At present the entire business of the world is conducted upon the hypothesis that undoubtedly two and two are four. This is taken for granted in all our calculations, and consequently, if this statement should be seriously questioned, the result would evidently be disastrous to all our commercial interests.

We are undoubtedly great logicians when our premises are all right. As already intimated, we can always move the world from its centre when we have a legitimate fulcrum for our lever. But, after all, much of our reasoning is like trying to lift ourselves in a basket. In such an effort we push down just as much as we pull up; and consequently, no progress can be made. This illustration will help us to understand that we must have an infallible starting point, lying outside of ourselves and our environment, in order that our reasoning may be absolutely correct. This is the only point of view that will give us conclusions wholly uninfluenced by considerations which usually more or less distort our judgments. Suppose it were possible for any one of us to look at this world from the planet Mars. Can we not at once imagine how this would modify many of our present views of life on the earth? We should then have a fulcrum for our logical lever which would enable us to reach conclusions without feeling the influence of our present earthly environment. This would enable us to form an unbiased judgment with respect to things on the earth. But as we are at present located, our fulcrum is in the basket with which we are trying to lift ourselves, and this fact leaves all our conclusions more or less open to legitimate criticism.

The same line of investigation as regards literature will give practically the same result as that obtained from mathematics. Why do we pronounce the first letter of the alphabet *a,* the second *b,* and the third *c?* Certainly this is not because there is any necessary connection between these signs and the sounds they respectively represent. The letters of the alphabet are quite arbitrary and might stand for any other sounds just as well as those they now represent. In fact, these letters do represent very different sounds in different languages. Why

then do we give them the sounds commonly used in the English language? Undoubtedly, for no other reason than is found in the fact that our parents and teachers taught us to give to these signs the sounds which we ascribe to them. They told us that the first letter of the alphabet should have the sound of *a*, the second *b*, the third *c*, and so on to the end of the alphabet, and we were simply fools enough to believe what they said; and this unquestioning faith enabled us to learn how to talk, how to spell, and how to read, and thus to construct the foundation of our education. This is the only legitimate explanation; and, this being true, it is evident that our whole literature is practically based upon faith. The process of development is simple enough. We hear, believe, and speak or write. As a matter of fact we do not reason at all as regards these primary things, and yet there is, perhaps, nothing with which we have to do that is more certain than these matters of faith which lie at the very foundation of all intellectual growth.

At any rate, as already suggested, it cannot be denied that all the business of commerce, which is so prominently characteristic of the present age, is practically conducted upon the faith which affirms that two and two are four, and not from any actual demonstration of the truth of this affirmation that has been brought out by ourselves. It is, likewise, true that the splendid literature of the English language has its origin in, and is built upon, the fact that the letters of the alphabet must be sounded according to the teaching of our parents and schoolmasters, without the slightest reference whatever to any necessary logical connection between the signs used and the sounds represented.

I have already intimated that we are great logicians; at least we think we are great logicians; and yet our reason-

ing, after all, may not be much more conclusive than that of the college boy who had returned home to enjoy a Christmas dinner with his parents. As they seated themselves at the table, where two nicely roasted ducks occupied a prominent place, the father anxiously inquired of his hopeful son something about the studies he was pursuing at college. The young man, anxious to impress his father with his marvellous learning, told the old gentleman that, among other things, he was studying logic. "And pray what is logic?" inquired *pater familias*. "Why, logic," responded the son, "is that science or art by which we are enabled to prove anything. I can prove," continued the youthful Aristotle, "anything I wish by logic. For instance, I can prove that there are three ducks on this table." The old gentleman looked incredulous, but commanded the son to proceed. "Well, father," said the son, "is not that one duck?" pointing to the nearest one. "Yes," said the old gentleman. "And is not that two ducks?" pointing to the other one. "And do not one and two make three?" "Certainly, my son." "Then," said the young man, "it evidently follows that there are three ducks on the table, and this is what my logic has demonstrated." "All right," said the father, "we will put this reasoning to a practical test." Whereupon he placed one of the ducks upon his wife's plate and the other upon his own plate, and then gravely said to his son, "You, my lad, may have the third duck for your logic."

We laugh at this sophomoric reasoning, and yet some of us seniors are not altogether free from similar absurdities. We either play upon our words, or else assume most of our facts. This is more or less true in nearly every department of investigation. Even science is not always consistent. Its very name suggests the impropriety of

speculating. Nevertheless, it is no longer doubtful that many who claim to be scientists, *par excellence,* are, after all, governed more by their own imagination than they are by well-established facts. I am not unreasonable. No one ought to expect intelligent men to confine their thinking to what is already known. There is a peculiar fascination about the undiscovered world, and this of itself is sufficient to account for every speculative tendency. It is not against the healthful play of the imagination that I make my protest. On the other hand, a legitimate exercise of the imagination is not only agreeable but also eminently useful. We often have to dream before we realise. Besides, life would be altogether too prosaic for endurance if there was no proper place for the imagination. It is not, therefore, a cause for complaint that there is some poetry within the sphere of scientific investigation; but it is a crying evil that this poetry is sometimes called fact, and is practically substituted for what only can be the foundation of trustworthy reasoning.

This tendency is especially noticeable in the discussion of biblical questions by scientific men. We have a right to expect better things of them. They are trained to regard matters of fact as of the first importance. Indeed, the inductive method of reasoning is but another name for the scientific method, and this inductive method bases all its conclusions upon well-established facts; and it must be confessed that scientists, in the main, do not trust much to guesswork while they are engaged in the examination of Nature. These gentlemen, however, seem to lose their heads just as soon as they begin to deal with the Bible. What appear to them to be contradictions must no longer receive fair treatment. Hence, the inductive method is at once discarded, while the wildest speculations are regarded as veritable facts. This

style is certainly very vicious. It leads to a destructive conflict which might easily be avoided if nothing was accepted that cannot be clearly verified. As an illustration of the vagaries of scientific men, when they trust to the imagination rather than to facts, it is only necessary to refer to what Mr. Darwin has said with regard to the origin of man. "I believe," he says, "by considering the embryological structure of man—the homologies which he presents with the lower animals, the rudiments which he retains, and the reversions to which he is liable —we can *partly* recall *in imagination* the former condition of our early progenitors, and can *approximately* place them in their proper position in the geological series." I have emphasised the three words to which special attention is directed, though if I were to quote the whole paragraph it would be evident that his argument is at every point built simply upon assumptions, while the words "probably," "if," "seems," etc., etc., at once suggest the foundation of his whole hypothesis. Surely such reasoning as this cannot be trusted to overturn the definite and clear-ringing statements of the Bible.

Equally distressing is the endless guesswork system of many of the Higher Critics. They assume that certain things are *probably* true, and then they go on to draw a conclusion which in their judgment is *unquestionably* true. The aim of the Higher Criticism is right enough, and no one ought to object to the most vigorous application of it in examining the claims of the Bible. If there is anything wrong in the Bible, or in any view of the Bible, surely every honest truth-seeker ought to rejoice to have this wrong removed. But we must sharply distinguish between a wrong which is simply assumed and one which has been proved to be such. Here is the only

vital question at issue between the Higher Critics and those who refuse to follow them in all their flights of imagination. The traditional view of the Bible may not be able to stand at every point, but this view will never be completely overthrown unless the facts of the case are forthcoming. At present, many of the alleged facts are without sufficient proof, while all the guesswork is really unworthy of a discussion involving such serious consequences. What is needed cannot be supplied by dreaming, nor again by building up a series of conclusions on what is little more than a vague probability.

My plea is for the facts. Let us have all these well established, and then inductions will be in order. Much of the discussion, as now conducted, is wholly illogical, and if the result is not satisfactory to the public our critics will have themselves to blame. These critics will write in vain in favour of a system of teaching the young, based upon the Higher Criticism; for the young, more than others, are influenced by matters of fact. At any rate, it is safe to say that no radical change will take place in our religious teaching until we have *unquestionable facts* from which to draw our conclusions.

These considerations serve well to emphasise the importance of a trustworthy fulcrum upon which to place our logical lever. We have seen that the only fulcrum we can possibly have in our primary investigations is faith; and in this conclusion I am simply echoing the most profound teaching of the ablest thinkers of all ages.

It is not my purpose to examine carefully the dogmatic deliverances of the schoolmen in either theology or philosophy; and yet, it may not be altogether out of place, if I call your attention to a few brief statements of some of the greatest theologians and philosophers of the past ages. The celebrated Anselm, in his Proslogion, says:

"I desire certainly to (scientifically) *understand* that truth which my heart believes and loves; yet I do not seek to understand that I may believe, but I believe that I may understand. For I believe the truth, because if I am unbelieving I cannot (philosophically) apprehend." Again he remarks, that "he who does not believe can have no experience, and he who has no experience cannot understand."

This is undoubtedly sound reasoning. It certainly does not exclude the possibility of scientific analysis; nor does it interfere in the slightest degree with a philosophical apprehension of truth. It simply fixes the starting point or the fulcrum, and this is declared to be *faith* as contradistinguished from *science*. And, yet, in my opinion, faith is not only the foundation of philosophy, but is, in an important sense, the highest expression of philosophy. In saying this I do not wish to specially antagonise the Cartesian axiom, *Cogito, ergo sum*. I am not so sure that this axiom will not do to start with; and yet if we reverse it, it seems quite as reasonable. Why not say *Sum, ergo cogito*. Let me illustrate. Suppose I say a wave of the sea heaves, *ergo* it exists, and than say a wave of the sea exists, therefore, it heaves. Which of these expressions is a better statement of the case? Such nice distinctions are not very profitable, and as a rule they leave the mind confused, and certainly do not settle anything definitely. A far better maxim than either of these is *Credo, ut intelligam*—"I believe that I may know."

Quite in harmony with the teaching of Anselm is that of St. Bernard, who was, perhaps, the greatest and noblest representative of the old-school theologians. In discussing the relations of science and faith, he says: "Science reposes upon reason; faith upon authority. Both, how-

ever, are in possession of a sure and valid truth; but faith possesses the truth in a close and involuted form, while science possesses it in an open and expanded one. Scientific cognition not only possesses the truth, but the distinct comprehension of it. Faith is a sort of sure and instinctive intimation of truth that is not yet opened up before the mind in clear analysis and outline. How then does faith differ from science? In this, namely, that although faith is not in possession of an uncertain or an invalid truth any more than science is, yet it is in possession of an undeveloped truth, while science has the truth in an unfolded form. Science does not desire to contradict faith; but it desires to cognise with plainness what faith knows with certainty."

Dr. Mansel tells us: "The cardinal point of Sir William Hamilton's system is, the absolute necessity, under any system of philosophy whatever, of acknowledging the existence of a sphere of belief beyond the limits of the sphere of thought."

To these striking quotations I might add the testimony of such eminent thinkers as M. Cousin, Archbishop Whately, Mr. Balfour, and others. But I feel confident that no more testimony is needed in order to establish my fundamental thesis, namely, that most, if not all, of our primary knowledge is based upon faith; and that it is not only true, "without faith we cannot please God," but it is also true, without faith we can make no progress in either religion, science, or philosophy. In short, faith is with respect to everything just what the Apostle to the Hebrews says it is; it stands under, or "is the foundation of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." This comprehensive statement makes faith fundamental, alike in things past, present, and future; and consequently it lies at the basis of all our development,

whether in religion, science, or philosophy. And in view of this fact, it is not remarkable that the Apostle Paul should say, "We walk by faith and not by sight."

I trust I have been able to make my meaning clear, for I am very anxious to impress my view of this matter upon the attention of those who now hear me. In these days of scientific inquiry there is an ugly tendency to deride faith; at least to minimise its importance; and my object is to show that even science would be utterly helpless were it not for the starting point which faith furnishes; and, even in its highest development, science would soon be a ship without a rudder were it not for its constant recurrence to the axioms and definitions which have been received wholly upon the principle of faith. This being true, Sir Bulwer Lytton was justified in saying: "Strike from mankind the principle of faith, and men would have no more history than a flock of sheep."

In view of the foregoing considerations it seems to me that faith must be regarded as fundamental in all our reasoning, and it therefore furnishes us with the fulcrum for which we have been seeking. Undoubtedly we must have some trustworthy starting point, or else it is impossible to reason at all with any certainty as to our conclusions. In our helplessness, on account of our limited vision, faith comes to our relief the moment that sight fails us, and hence it is eminently true in everything as in religion that "we walk by faith and not by sight," though in some things sight has a farther reach than it has in others. From a scientific point of view faith is often regarded as an obtrusive interloper, but as a matter of fact science itself would consist simply of a hopeless jumble of words, without any definite meaning whatever, were it not for the very faith which the laboratory discards so unceremoniously.

But faith is not only fundamental in all our reasoning, but it also marks very emphatically man's limitations, and fixes definitely the boundary line of his investigations. The Psalmist tells us that man was created "a little lower than God." This is a very suggestive statement. Were it not for that space between God and man, man would be without any limitations whatever. He would be practically equal with God, and would therefore be omniscient as well as omnipotent. But it is that space which marks his inferiority and fixes his limitations; and it is precisely that space which separates him from God, which measures the exact sphere of faith. It is in this domain that faith reigns supreme. It is just here where it exercises supreme authority, and supplements man's weakness by bridging over the distance which separates him from God. By faith man is able to cross this chasm of the unknown and have communion with the invisible and the infinite.

From this point of view faith becomes a constant sign of man's weakness, and is practically the only possible means by which man can become strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. No wonder the Apostle, in his letter to the Hebrews, should tell us of the wonders that men have performed through the aid which faith gives to them. After enumerating a long list of heroes, who through faith accomplished mighty deeds, the Apostle concludes by saying:

"And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jepthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets;

"Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

"Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the

sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

With such a fulcrum as this for our lever, and such a guide as this for our sight, and such an inspiration as this for our courage, we may now enter upon the investigation of the great questions which lie before us, and which must more or less occupy the attention of every well-equipped minister of the Gospel who assumes to keep in touch with the great questions which are to the fore in this inquiring, active, and earnest twentieth century age.

XIV

THE PROBLEM OF SCIENCE

From one point of view the problem of science has no necessary troublesome relation to the preacher's work. It is the duty of the preacher, and it ought to be his high ambition, to study carefully and reverently nature and nature's laws. There is a point of view, however, from which the introduction of science may possibly precipitate a conflict as regards faith.

I wish to state with the utmost frankness, before proceeding any further with this subject, that I do not believe there are any just grounds for bringing science and faith into antagonism. The same God who made the universe made the Bible, and He made the Bible very much in the same way that He made the universe. He used instrumentalities in producing both. He worked through laws, and these are as apparent in one case as in the other. It is true that "science falsely so-called" may antagonise the faith, and a perverted faith may antagonise a perfectly true science; but a true faith and a true science must necessarily be in harmony when they are both well understood, and are placed in their proper relations towards each other.

Just here is where much of the difficulty which is supposed to exist as regards science and faith finds its origin. Many do not understand science, or else give to it a place which it cannot legitimately occupy. It is equally true that many do not understand the faith, or the religion of the Bible, or else they insist that this faith shall become

perfectly blind to all the teaching of science. However, these extreme views must be abandoned, if we would have an irenicon between the two great factors in the problem now under consideration.

We have already seen how important faith is as a fundamental principle in our lives, and how we must accept with equal respect the well-established teaching of science. I use the phrase "well-established" advisedly. We dare not disturb our faith with mere guesses. The very word science entirely precludes the notion that the guesses can be trusted. We must *know* things before we can speak confidently with respect to the teaching of science. Nevertheless, this is precisely where many are inconsistent. They protest against accepting truth which cannot be demonstrated by the usual scientific methods, and yet as a matter of fact they virtually accept very much that has little more basis than a speculative imagination.

Of course much might be said on the same grounds against theologians. They are also fond of speculation, and they often indulge in this without any facts whatever to justify either their premises or conclusions.

But these are habits of mind and not characteristics of either science or faith. What men do is one thing; what they *ought* to do is quite another thing. What is true is true wherever it is found, no matter whether it be in the sphere of science or religion, and what is false is false whether it is found in hell or in heaven.

From an important point of view faith and science are one. They form the subject and predicate of a sentence of which religion is the copulative. This binds them together, and they meet in it, not as enemies, but as ardent friends. It is, however, claimed by some that at least in three respects there is an irreconcilable conflict between science and faith. It may be well to examine somewhat

carefully this contention, as it cannot be denied that those who take this position are somewhat influential, especially in educational circles.

It is a fact, I think, and a fact, too, of great significance, that this antagonism between science and faith finds its chief support in our colleges and universities. No doubt the breach between science and faith within our educational institutions has been accentuated beyond what the facts will justify. Nevertheless, after making due allowance for exaggeration, it is still true that much of the scepticism of the present time finds its chief support precisely where it ought to receive its complete overthrow. Our educational institutions ought to stand for a rational faith in opposition to all superstition on one side and "science so-called" on the other; and I am personally fully persuaded that the present tendency on the subject is in the right direction, and consequently the day may not be far distant when our colleges and universities will become the most pronounced centres of an influence in favour of the religion of the Bible. At any rate it is well for us to note the points of apparent conflict between science and religion that our preachers at least may understand clearly what they will have to contend with in adjusting their work to what has been called the modern view of the world. Let us note the following as some of the special points of the supposed conflict between science and religion.

(1) There is supposed to be an irreconcilable conflict between the doctrine of evolution and the teaching of the Bible; but this supposed conflict is based entirely upon suppositions which are not necessarily true. Before this matter can be determined with any satisfactory assurance, it is necessary for us to know precisely what is meant by the doctrine of evolution and what is meant by the teach-

ing of the Bible. There is undoubtedly an irreconcilable conflict between some definitions of evolution and some definitions of Bible teaching. But, as has already been intimated, both of these may be wrong, and consequently we cannot proceed with any reasonable certainty toward conclusions, as regards the matter under consideration, until we have a clearly defined statement of what are the things that are supposed to be in conflict. It is well known that evolution is somewhat like a celebrated doctor's fits. Curing fits was his specialty, and when sent for to treat a case of typhoid fever, he frankly stated that he knew very little about the treatment of fever, but if he could turn the disease into fits, he was quite sure he could cure the patient, as he was "death on fits." Now there are a few scientific doctors who claim to be able to cure all the discords in the universe whenever they can turn them into evolution, for they are great on evolution. With them this is the omnipotent key which unlocks all mysteries, explains all difficulties, and brings harmony out of all seeming discords. It is true that these doctors differ among themselves as to what evolution is, but they all agree that no matter what it is, it is the sovereign remedy for all the disorders in the universe.

But however this may be, it seems to me the time has come when no one should be frightened at the word evolution. It is quite harmless when it is properly defined and wisely used, but it must not be allowed to mean any or everything. It must not be allowed to occupy the position that the term "fits" did in the case of the doctor to whom reference has been made. When considered from a proper point of view I think we are all evolutionists. Prof. Le Conte's definition is very popular with theistic evolutionists; but in my judgment his definition needs considerable amendment before it can be entirely satis-

factory. He says, "Evolution is continuous progressive change, according to certain laws and by means of resident forces." But this definition does not account for the laws, nor the resident forces. It is furthermore doubtful what is meant by "continuous progressive change." According to some of the ablest writers on the subject it is conceded that this "progressive change" is "continuous" only through certain fixed periods, and that at the end of these periods there is a definite "break," after which a new period begins. This is practically the position of Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, and it is also the position of many other able writers on the subject.

It may be impossible to construct a definition of evolution which will be entirely satisfactory to all who are concerned in the controversy between science and religion; but in my recent book, entitled "Man Preparing For Other Worlds," I have amended Le Conte's definition, so that it seems to me the whole ground is practically covered. The following is my definition: "Evolution is continuous progressive change through certain fixed periods, according to certain laws and by means of resident forces, which laws and forces are supplied, put into operation and controlled by an intelligent, supernatural agent." This definition makes up for the defects in Prof. Le Conte's. His fails to recognise any place for miracle, and yet without such recognition it is impossible to account for many facts that cannot be disputed. However, if it is allowed that "continuous progressive change" may be broken at the end of certain periods, and then a new start taken, with an added element of power from without, this reasonable concession will do much to clarify the atmosphere and also remove many difficulties which otherwise would be encountered.

The old doctrine of evolution, as set forth by Darwin,

Spencer, and others, is no longer seriously entertained by either well-informed scientists or theologians. It has always been felt that some definite, unmistakable starting point must be assured before any progress whatever can be made in arriving at trustworthy conclusions with regard to either the origin of the universe or the laws by which it is governed. It does not help us much to say that the oak comes from the acorn, and then in turn to say the acorn comes from the oak. This reasoning will have no place in any system of logic where intelligence is admitted as an important factor. But it is precisely by this method of reasoning that freshmen and sophomores, and I am sorry to include some of their professors also, are wont to deride the notion of theistic evolution while virtually contradicting the old Latin truism: "*Ex nihilo nihil fit*"—Out of nothing nothing comes.

Now how shall the preacher deal with this question of evolution? Doubtless some will say he ought not to deal with it at all; he ought to let it alone. But a thing that is in the air cannot always be let alone. However, in this case there is no need that evolution should be let alone. It gives a helpful view of the universe, and is equally important as a key to the moral government of God. But we must know what we mean when we talk about evolution, and we must mean the right thing. A wild, speculative tendency with respect to the origin of things, or even as regards the way things are managed, should be avoided. Nor is it worth while to be always or even frequently explaining the *how* of things. The preacher should stick to the *facts,* whatever these may be, and he need not trouble himself very much in order to explain these facts, especially when any explanation may be open to serious objection. Speaking broadly, it is best not to raise questions of doubtful disputation which engender

strife rather than edification and harmony. A preacher may take a great many things for granted, when, if an attempt was made to explain them, he would find in his audience many objectors. In the main the preacher should confine himself to facts, and when he does this he will not have much difficulty with evolution.

One thing, however, he should constantly keep in view. He should never lose sight of the important consideration that when he can state his theological conceptions in the language of science he ought to do so, for this will help him to be understood by a large class of people who, for the most part, are mystified by theological terms. Indeed, our theological terms very generally need a reincarnation, or at any rate, to have a rest, while terms which express the current ideas of modern life ought to be substituted for them. This whole matter of terms needs careful consideration. At present it is sufficient to say that when our theological terms shall be made to correspond to those used by men of science and men in the commercial world, it is probable that much of the apparent antagonism between religion and modern life will cease to exist. Any way, the preacher must use such terms in his pulpit ministrations as will reduce this antagonism as much as possible. He has no right to use his pulpit opportunity to propagate some side issue, or some theory, whether scientific or not, when he knows, by doing so, he will only widen the breach between science and religion. He should do everything in his power to bring these two into harmony, and this can certainly be done by insisting upon a sensible irenicon, for there is undoubtedly no real conflict between what nature teaches and what the Bible teaches.

Another point of apparent conflict between science and religion is where the respective historical records of science and religion are involved. In other words, the testimony

of the rocks is supposed to contradict the testimony of the Bible, as regards the story of creation as well as other things. It is assumed by some distinguished scientists that the first chapter of Genesis cannot be accepted as trustworthy history, and some theologians, in order to meet the objection of scientists, have been willing, as I believe, to concede the demands of these scientists, and consequently have constructed various theories with respect to the Bible story of creation so as to satisfy the conditions of the case.

At present, perhaps, the most popular theory is the one which assumes that the first chapter of Genesis is practically poetry; at any rate it is not history; it is at least allegorical. The basis of this remarkable concession is that the Bible story of creation is not intended to be history, but simply a graphic presentation for the purpose of teaching religion rather than science.

Now this seems to me to be a weak defence of a bad cause. It may be that the language used in the graphic description in Genesis ought not to be interpreted in the light of our Western ideas without due consideration for the habits of oriental languages. However, it is by no means certain that even this precaution should be observed with respect to the first chapter of Genesis. While the style of this chapter is highly picturesque, and sometimes marvellously sublime, it is very doubtful whether any one can ever show conclusively that this language must be accepted as only metaphor without any substantial historical basis. My own conviction is that it is a concise, beautiful, and wholly trustworthy statement of the origin, lapse, and final reconstruction of the universe. I make this statement with emphasis advisedly. I believe I know the ground on which I stand, and I feel confident that it is solid ground. Furthermore, I feel just as confident

that it is the only ground that will stand a thorough investigation of all the facts of the case.

It will help to understand my meaning if we consider the first chapter of Genesis as embracing three distinct periods, viz.:

(1) The creative period.

(2) The chaotic period.

(3) The organic period.

It seems to me that all these periods are distinctly marked in the chapter. Indeed, without such division as I have made it is impossible to see the beautiful harmony and the orderly development which the chapter clearly teaches, when understood.

Let us consider these periods separately.

(1) *The creative period.* The first verse simply states a fact, viz., that the heavens and the earth were in the beginning created by God. Now when this "beginning" was no one can tell, nor is it necessary for us to know. It may have been millions of years ago, and it may have been only a few thousand years ago. With God one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. We need not trouble ourselves about *time* when we are dealing with the infinite. When we do so we are certain to confuse ourselves as well as the facts of both nature and the Bible. The special thing that the preacher needs to emphasise is that in "the beginning," whenever that was, the whole cosmos was created by God. This much must be clearly accepted as a starting point in order to make any progress whatever in discussing the origin and history of the universe.

(2) *The chaotic period.* The language of the second verse may be rendered somewhat differently from what it is in many of our versions. The Hebrew may be translated as follows: "The earth had become waste and wild,

and darkness was upon the face of the great abyss." This language clearly indicates that there had been an overthrow, after God had created the heavens and the earth. In other words, the creative period was followed by one of chaos, when darkness brooded over the face of the great abyss. Now just how this overthrow was effected we are left entirely to conjecture, as there is not even a hint with respect to the cause of it. However, it will help us to remember that the history here is intended to be very concise. Whole æons are included in a single sentence. Nevertheless, it may be well to remember that this great overthrow of the physical universe is quite in harmony with the law of progression, as we find it in subsequent history. The fall of man in Eden, the destruction of the world by a flood, and the death of all men, are examples of the same method of the divine government. It seems to be a law of the universe that everything must pass through a certain overthrow, or collapse, before it can reach the highest point of development. "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." Blessed is the man who has the grace to fail, for when he rises out of this, he will have gained immensely by the struggle through which he has passed. Truly may we say that all history does emphasise the fact that the darkest hour is just before day. "A corn of wheat, unless it dies, abides alone; but if it dies it brings forth much fruit." The chaotic period of darkness was followed by the period of light, the consideration of which may now be taken up.

(3) *The organic period.* This period was introduced by the dissipation of darkness through that sublime fiat with which the organic period began. "God said let there be light, and light was." The successive steps of this organic period are all distinctly marked, involving at least three definite creative acts, viz., the creation of

vitality, the creation of *consciousness,* and the creation of *spirituality.* The first of these was created on the third day, and the second on the fifth day, and the third on the sixth day.

Now all this is in harmony with what science teaches. In fact, it is doubtful whether one hundred of the most distinguished geologists of the present day could come together and formulate, in the same space, so intelligent and truthful account of the origin and development of the universe as is given in the first chapter of Genesis. But supposing that there may be some things in this chapter not quite in harmony with the present accepted views of geologists, is it not easier to believe that there is something wrong in our facts as to either the Bible or nature, or both, than that the first chapter of Genesis is simply poetry or fable or a piece of guesswork? The science of geology is only about a hundred years old, and consequently the writer of Genesis could not have known anything about it. Now is it not inconceivable that this writer could have produced such a record as he has given unless he was in some way divinely guided to state the facts as he has done? In short, the first chapter of Genesis is the miracle of miracles, if it must be regarded as a piece of guesswork, and he who can believe that such is its character is credulous enough to believe anything under the sun when it suits his convenience to do so. But it is certainly the very quintessence of absurdity to suppose that the author of Genesis could have written the account we have in our possession without some trustworthy guidance either of history or inspiration, since he evidently knew nothing about the science of geology as we now possess it. Consequently it is much easier, from even the standpoint of science, to believe that the writer was divinely guided than that he was capable of guessing

the facts that he has given us, even though some of these do not seem to quite harmonise at every point with what we to-day know of geology. If, in a few things, a complete irenicon between science and the Bible has not been quite established, is it not better to wait for a fuller knowledge of both science and the Bible than to reject the Bible with so much truth in it and accept of science even when there is so little in it out of harmony with divine revelation?

But the preacher has to do mainly with the Christian religion, and it may be well, therefore, to notice wherein this religion seems to be open to attack from the scientific point of view.

The three great facts of the Christian religion are,

(1) The existence and oversight of a personal God;

(2) The redemptive work of Christ;

(3) The life everlasting.

Let us now briefly consider these in reference to the teaching of science. Evidently science does not contradict the existence and supervision of the universe by a personal God. But as the scientist deals with simply the laws of nature, he may conclude, and often does conclude, that these laws are responsible for everything that exists as well as the manner of its existence. But this is a *non sequitur,* and is unworthy of those who make the statement. It is perfectly true that the reign of law is seen everywhere, that is if we mean by the reign of law, that law actually exists everywhere. But if we mean that laws have power in themselves, independent of the author of these laws, to create anything, then the phrase "reign of law" is entirely misleading. Law does not create anything; it is simply the *method* by which the governor acts. Law is entirely inoperative, if left to itself. That is precisely why there are three distinct

branches in our own government; viz., the Legislative, Judicial, and Executive. The Legislative department makes the laws, the Judicial department interprets them, and the Executive department executes them. Without the Executive all our laws would be inoperative. As regards the divine government, God makes the laws, interprets them, and executes them. He unites in himself the Legislative, Judicial, and Executive departments of government.

It is just here where many scientists go astray. They try to explain the origin of things by the existence of laws, without accounting for how these laws came into existence or by what force they are operated. It is like saying a watch will run by its mainspring without accounting for the creation of the mainspring and the personal supervision which winds the watch every day.

It is freely conceded that at this point much of the scepticism of the present day finds its beginning. But there is no need for this at all, even from a scientific point of view. The most that scientists can say with respect to this matter is that the existence and supervision of a God may not be satisfactorily demonstrated in the laboratory. But this ought not to be expected. God is not of the nature that He can be subjected to the test of crucibles and retorts. It is just here where faith comes in and supplies what science is impotent to give us.

The preacher must not try to prove too much. A robust faith will be worth more to him frequently than all the science of the books. He needs to believe much of even the simplest things.

(2) *The redemptive work of Christ.* The word of the cross is still a stumbling block to the Jew and foolishness to the Greek. The rationalistic spirit that rejected the redemptive work of Christ at Corinth is still an im-

portant factor in the modern world. Science really has nothing to do with this subject; but in spite of all protests scientists will meddle with that which does not properly belong to the sphere of their investigations. It must be admitted that the habit of mind which a scientist forms is not easily checked when it reaches the bounds of material things. It seeks to go further, and often presses its inquiries beyond its legitimate domain. Theology does the same thing. It seeks to regulate the possibilities of science by its own dimensions. Both of these habits are likely to lead to illegitimate conclusions.

It is difficult for a scientist, who subjects everything to physical tests, to understand the nature of moral evil or how this must be dealt with in order to overcome its influence in the progressive development of the world. Nevertheless, there is nothing in the well-established laws of nature which in any way contradicts the Bible doctrine of sin. The groaning of nature itself, to use the impressive figure of the Apostle Paul, and the pathetic waiting for the deliverance of the creation from the bondage of corruption, go far to prove that sin is in the world and must be dealt with in some way in order that its ravages may be stopped.

Now there are only three ways in which sin can be dealt with, so far as I can see.

In the first place, *sin may be let alone.* In this case men will grow worse and worse and the world will become more and more degraded. This is an alternative which cannot be accepted by any reasonable man. That sin is here producing its fruits no one will seriously question; and it is equally certain that, if let alone, its consequences will be evil and that continually.

In the second place, *sin may be punished.* This was largely the divine method under the Jewish dispensation.

This punishment went so far as to take the children of Israel into captivity and subject them to an exile in a strange land. In fact, until the coming of Christ the main effort was to restrain sin rather than to put it away. The law simply revealed sin, and then punished it, but did not eradicate it or provide a permanent cure for it.

In the third place, *sin may be pardoned.* This is the Christian way of dealing with it. Just here we meet the redemptive work of Christ. "He became sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

But it is exactly at this point where what is called scientific scepticism begins to make its strongest protest. This scepticism will not accept the doctrine of the atonement. It utterly refuses to believe that the sacrifice of Christ was necessary in order to the salvation of the world; hence the preaching of the cross, or the word of the cross, is to them who perish foolishness, but to us, who are saved, it is both the power of God and the wisdom of God.

It is just at this point where the preacher will find one of his toughest problems, and it is a problem with which he must deal in order to satisfy some who will attend his ministry. Nevertheless, it is a problem which he must handle with great care. Really there is nothing in it, from the Christian point of view, that in the slightest degree contradicts any well-established fact in nature. On the contrary it may be asserted with confidence that the word of the cross is itself in perfect line with the whole working of nature, and that, therefore, the redemptive work of Christ is thoroughly in harmony with the laws of nature, so far as we are able to comprehend these laws. It may be that the subject of the atonement is too deep for the finite mind to fathom; but the same may be said of the physical universe. There is much in the

world immediately about us that is just as great a mystery as anything connected with the salvation of souls. However, it is comforting to know that gradually even nature is yielding up her secrets, and that all these secrets, when revealed to us, only accentuate the beautiful harmony which exists everywhere in all the works of God, whether in creation, providence, or redemption.

(3) *The Life Everlasting.* This is perhaps the most distinguishing characteristic of Christianity wherein it seems to come in conflict with the teaching of science. It is easier to believe in the existence and supervision of a personal God, and also the redemptive work of Christ, than to believe in the resurrection of the dead. The doctrine of immortality has been a cardinal belief among men since at least the dawn of history, though this belief has varied much in its forms of expression, and in some cases it is scarcely entitled to be called a belief at all. But it remained for Christianity to proclaim the startling doctrine of the resurrection, and this is based chiefly upon the fact that the Founder of Christianity was raised from the dead. The Apostle Paul makes this very clear in the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians. He frankly admits that if Christ was not raised from the dead then our faith is vain and we are yet in our sins. From this point of view it is evident that the resurrection of Christ must be predicated before his redemptive work can be regarded as effective. Hence the three great fundamental facts of the Gospel, viz., the death of Christ for our sins, according to the Scriptures, his burial, and his resurrection from the dead on the third day, according to the Scriptures, must be affirmed at all times and everywhere, in order to proclaim the fulness of the Gospel message. But science sees the body decay and return to its mother dust. It does not see it raised from the dead in any such manner

as makes certain the life everlasting; and consequently it is just at this point that science hesitates with respect to the future life.

But why this hesitation? "Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should raise the dead?" When a personal God is postulated there ought to be little difficulty in accepting the doctrine of the resurrection. Indeed, there is much in the teaching of science which strongly suggests the possibility and even the probability of the life everlasting. In nature, death is only a change—there is really no annihilation. All the processes of nature go through death and resurrection. The way to life is always by death. Truly has it been said:

> "Life ever more is fed by death
> In earth and sea and sky;
> And that a rose may breathe its breath,
> Something must die."

Nevertheless, it is important for us to maintain that the Christian doctrine of the resurrection is based upon faith, and that it is none the less certain on that account. We have already seen that "faith is the foundation of things hoped for—the conviction of things not seen," and without this faith it is perhaps impossible for any one to be fully assured with respect to the life everlasting. Belief in the resurrection of the dead is after all based upon testimony. This testimony, when thoroughly sifted, is overwhelmingly conclusive. Undoubtedly there is nothing in the doctrine of the resurrection which is contrary to science, though it is possible for those who do not believe the testimony of the Bible to become at least agnostics with regard to the resurrection of the dead; but agnosticism is not science; it is simply a negation, and consequently does not affirm anything.

However, the preacher will find that he will be compelled to deal with the problems suggested by the Christian affirmation concerning the existence of a personal God, the redemptive work of Christ, and the life everlasting. Still, it may be well for him to remember that, after all, the breach between science and faith is not so great as some would make believe. Since the time when Prof. Christlieb published his splendid work on "Modern Doubt and Christian Belief," the chasm between science and religion has been perceptibly bridged over, and there is now among the most thoughtful men a very decided belief that the time is not far distant when a satisfactory irenicon will be accepted by both parties to the controversy, and that ultimately both science and religion will become, what they ought to be, coördinates and helpers in the great work of saving and beautifying the world.

It should also be remembered that the breach between science and faith never has been so wide as noisy sceptics have indicated. As a matter of fact, the great scientific men of the world are neither irreligious nor even un-Christian. Recently Dr. Dennert, of Berlin, collected information concerning 300 prominent men of science in ancient and modern times. He found that 242 of these believed in God, 38 gave no information whatever as to their belief, 15 were either agnostics or inclined to disbelief, and only five avowed themselves to be anti-Christian materialists.

This is a startling induction, but it goes to show that even five noisy sceptics can make half of the Christian world believe that the religion of Christ is rapidly giving way before the onward march of science; and this, too, right in the face of the fact that in no other period of the history of Christianity have there been such rapid strides made in achieving unmistakable triumphs as at the pres-

ent time. Facts are said to be stubborn things, and when the claims of scepticism are subjected to the real facts of the case, there is certainly nothing in the present outlook to discourage even the timid with respect to the ultimate success of the Christianity of the New Testament. The one thing the preacher needs to do is to stick to his guns, keep on the firing-line; and while he should welcome every real scientific discovery as a part of his equipment for service, he should, at the same time, keep prominently in his own heart and also before his people the transcendent and glorious fact that the religion of Christ is, first of all, a religion of faith, and not specially of science.

XV

PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS

Philosophy is as old as the human race. With the first dawn of reasoning is born the everlasting *why*. Men will ask questions. The thirst for knowledge has been both the shame and glory of mankind. It was this thirst that precipitated the tragedy in Eden. But this was seeking for illegitimate knowledge. As the ruin came by using a good thing unlawfully, the rescue must come by using the same thing lawfully. There was not so much in the thing itself by which our first parents were tempted, as in the illegitimate use of that thing. It had been forbidden, and the partaking of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was a clear and unequivocal disobedience of the divine command. God had said that of the fruit of this tree they should not eat, and He had given no reason why this fruit should be prohibited, except that an evil result would follow. The serpent at once became a philosopher, and presented his reasons why the command of God should be disobeyed.

Here is just where we find the key to all philosophic questions. As long as our inquiries are legitimate, or, in other words, in harmony with the commands of God, so long may we be sure that we are in the bounds of safety. But when our inquiries go beyond what is written, we at once begin to traverse dangerous ground.

As already intimated, men have always been philosophers, but not very many yet understand philosophy. They ask questions, but cannot answer them in any satis-

factory manner; and it often happens that their questions are prompted by an unlawful spirit which has little or no respect whatever for divine authority. But we have already seen that divine authority is the boundary line to human investigation, and any effort to pass beyond this is sure to lead to fatal consequences.

However, it is certain that the preacher will have to deal with some philosophical questions, and a few suggestions with regard to this inevitable service may be helpful, especially to young preachers. The following is submitted as the best way to deal with these questions:

(1) No preacher should hold himself bound to explain all the difficulties of either nature or grace. It has been truly said a child may ask more questions in a minute than the wisest man can answer in a lifetime. It does not necessarily imply ignorance upon the part of the preacher because he cannot explain everything in the universe. Some of the simplest things with which we have constantly to do are entirely beyond our comprehension. It is generally better to be frank with the people than to attempt a solution of difficulties which we ourselves do not understand.

I desire to emphasise this point because pride of intellect sometimes controls the preacher and leads him into speculations which are neither good for himself nor for those whose doubts he is seeking to allay. Better by far is it to own our ignorance than to display it in an effort to be wise. Honest ignorance is always superior to educated hypocrisy. Pretence will never pass muster for any length of time. It may have a short run of success, but it will as certainly finally come to grief as that it has no foundation on which to stand. It has been true, and will forever be true, that

"Truth crushed to earth shall rise again,—
The eternal years of God are hers;
While Error, wounded, writhes with pain,
And dies among his worshippers."

(2) The average church attendant is not benefited by philosophical disquisitions in the pulpit. Most people who attend church do not care to hear profound discussions concerning philosophical matters. They go to church in order to receive help for the struggle of life. They are more interested in the facts about them than they are in the philosophical treatment of these facts. They may ask questions, and doubtless will frequently, but these questions have their origin in an innate curiosity rather than in any practical consideration of the matters involved. A good cure for any unlawful speculative tendency is a strong appeal to the facts themselves rather than the explanation of these facts. Take an illustration or two. Every one will admit that sin is a real fact. No one may be able to explain satisfactorily how it entered the world or why it entered. However, as a matter of fact it is here, and consequently we must deal with it in the wisest possible manner, no matter what its philosophy may be. Death is also here, and no sort of reasoning can abolish death or mitigate its terrors without the antidote which has been provided in the Gospel scheme. In this practical way the preacher may keep out of deep water wherein he may drown himself, as well as his audience.

(3) The foregoing suggestions must not be regarded as excluding legitimate inquiry into any problem of either Physiology, Psychology, or Pneumatology. Man himself comprehends within himself a real microcosm. He is a world in miniature, he is a universe in meaning. It would be unlike man, and would certainly not be manly, if he

failed to seek to become acquainted with all the parts of his vast habitation. Doubtless he will never be able to comprehend everything within the universe which constitutes his immediate environment, to say nothing of the illimitable domain which he may occupy in the future. But every instinct of his nature ought to impel him to equip himself with all the legitimate knowledge that may come to him through earnest study of both the laws of nature and of grace. But this is a very different thing from that tendency to which attention has been called of seeking to answer unlawful questions which engender strife rather than contribute to edification. Philosophy undoubtedly has its proper place, and in that place it may be used for the best interests of the spiritual development, but when used unlawfully it is sure to lead to spiritual paralysis, if not to spiritual death.

XVI

ETHICAL PROBLEMS

Ethical problems have undoubtedly been somewhat modified by the modern view of the world. The science of conduct cannot fail to be an important study for the preacher, and should at least furnish him with much valuable material for his pulpit ministrations; and yet ethics, after all, is a normative science rather than a practical science. Ethics has to do with an *end* or an *ideal,* and this distinguishes it from most other sciences. It deals not so much with what actually is as with what *ought* to be. Hence the word "ought" is the greatest word in ethical science. It suggests the high ideal, or the *summum bonum,* of all true living, and this high ideal, though not of the nature of practical science, is, nevertheless, closely allied to the practical in all that relates to conduct. Indeed, the study of the ideal in conduct is rather philosophical than scientific, and consequently, if we take this view of the matter, ethics is more closely related to philosophy than it is to science.

Nevertheless, there is much in ethics which concerns the preacher, and especially will he find on the practical side of ethics a great deal that will command his most careful and prayerful consideration. He need not trouble himself with the historical development of ethical ideas. In the wilderness of these ideas he may soon lose himself entirely, and also utterly confuse the minds of his hearers. But it may be well for him to acquaint himself thoroughly with some of the ethical systems of the present day, and, at any rate, he will be compelled to deal with some of the

popular ethical ideas which are at present current among scholars and thinkers.

One of these ideas is comprehended in what has been called the problem of knowledge and the problem of value. Now there is really nothing new in the new apologetics which is supposed to come out of an attempt at harmony between these two problems. The problem of knowledge and the problem of value are as old as man himself. Indeed, both of these problems were involved in the prohibition which God proclaimed to Adam in the Garden of Eden. However, these problems, in our modern life, are supposed to require a new interpretation and a new setting in order to fit what has been called the new view of the world.

In this new treatment of these old problems a great mistake has been made in assuming that the problem of value does not in any way depend upon the problem of knowledge. This view is practically nothing more than the utilitarian view of conduct, and which is no longer very seriously considered by the best thinkers of the age. While the categorical imperative of Kant gives us form without content, utilitarianism gives us content without form. Neither of these gives us the whole truth, as we shall see when we have proceeded a little further with our present discussion.

To illustrate the view I am now antagonising, the rainbow has been used by some speakers and writers. By these it is declared that the rainbow is equally beautiful to the man who does not understand its cause and the man who does; and from this fact the conclusion is drawn that the character of Christ is just as beautiful if we know nothing about his origin as it is when we are sure that He is the only begotten son of God. In short, it is declared that Christ may have come up out of humanity just as others have come up out of it, and still be the incomparable, un-

approachable example for all human living, and consequently we may regard it as a great gain for the sake of practical results, if the question of knowledge can be eliminated from the problem of Christ.

Now all this may seem plausible to some thinkers, and probably not a few may be found who sympathise with this view of the matter. But, after all, it must be distinctly affirmed that the whole argument by which this view is sustained is based upon a series of subtle fallacies which, when eliminated, leaves the contention without the shadow of a shade of foundation upon which to rest.

Now, there are just three ways in which we may explain the things of the present life. One is the explanation by *beginning*. This is mainly the scientific method. It is in this way we explain ordinary natural phenomena. We go back to the origin or beginning, at least as far back as it is possible for us to go, and then trace the causes that have been in operation throughout the whole development of the subject under discussion. We do not ask what the *end* is or will be.

But is it possible to study ethics or religion in precisely this same fashion? We shall see how this will work out, when we have advanced a little further.

The second method of explaining things is by the *process of development*. This is largely the view of Mr. Herbert Spencer and many other evolutionists.

There is still a third view which makes explanation by the *end*, and this assumes that everything must be tested by the end or ideal which is before us.

Now let us return to the problem of values which has already been mentioned, and especially to the illustration of the rainbow to which reference has been made.

While I would not for a moment wish you to consider physical things, as regards their value, as of the same

class with moral or spiritual things, at the same time it may be stated with confidence, I think, that the illustration used does not illustrate. It is not true, never was true, and never will be true, in my judgment, that the beauty of the rainbow is equal to the man who knows nothing about its origin and purpose and to the man who does. Is the value of a physical gift influenced in no way by the question as to who is the giver? and the further question, as to *why* the gift is bestowed? Is not our sense of beauty almost immeasurably augmented by the increment of knowledge with respect to both the origin and the end of that beauty? It seems to me that it is a waste of time to answer such questions as this, and I, therefore, at once proceed to another phase of the subject.

We have been speaking of physical beauty, but the real question before us is moral beauty; and here the increment of knowledge is of vastly more importance. Jesus Christ claimed that He had a divine origin, and that He came into the world for a certain end. Now if this is not true, the beauty of his character, as we at present see it, would diminish immeasurably. Looked at from a one-sided view, the cross itself is exceedingly repulsive, but when we understand its origin and purpose or end, its repulsiveness disappears, and we can say with the Apostle, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world."

But we are told that the statements of Christ's relation to the Father and his divine origin are biblical statements, and that the scientific spirit of the age will not accept these statements without scientific verification. But how then do we know that any such person as Jesus the Christ ever lived upon this earth? Is it possible for us to take the evidence concerning his life and character into the

laboratory and subject this evidence to the tests of crucibles and retorts? Who has ever required such a test before concerning any historical fact? Scientific evidence is one thing and historical evidence is quite another, and yet there are places where they run parallel. Many of our books of science were made by men who are now dead and who could not bring their evidence into the laboratory. It is true that much of this evidence may be put to the test in the laboratory by others, but as a matter of fact this is very seldom done for the purpose of verifying the statements made. Usually these statements are accepted upon the testimony of the witnesses who have themselves worked out the problem. Perhaps nine-tenths of our scientific knowledge may be regarded as wholly belonging to matters of faith. As has already been remarked, we learn our alphabet by faith. We learn our mathematics in the same way. We do not question that two and two are four, while it is probable that not one in five hundred thousand of even educated men have ever taken the trouble to demonstrate the fact by appealing it to the higher mathematics.

In a word, faith is the fundamental element in all our reasoning, whether that reasoning relates to natural science or to religion. Hence, the nonsense of supposing that it is necessary to demonstrate in the laboratory by actual experiment the claim that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. It seems to me that the absurdity of absurdities is couched in this unreasonable demand.

But let me ask again, how do we know that such a person as Jesus Christ ever lived upon this earth, if the rigid demands of scientific inquiry must be met? The men who hold the view I am criticising always give us a very beautiful picture of the character of Jesus. But where do they get the material with which to make this picture? Did it ever occur to them that they are indebted to the New

Testament for all that they know about Christ, for all that proclaims his divine origin, supernatural birth, and his resurrection from the grave? Now how can they claim the authority of the New Testament for the material so freely used while forming an estimate of his character, and then reject its authority for the facts that establish his divinity? It seems to me that the legs of the lame are unequal, and at any rate the logic of these men would compel us to get rid of Christ entirely, and therefore leave the world destitute of that beautiful personality which is to-day the most potent influence in the world's moral uplift.

It is furthermore true that there is always great danger in illustrating the moral life by physical things, or by the development of the animal kingdom. The latter may help us somewhat in understanding how the moral life actually develops, but history deals with what *has been,* and not with what *ought* to have been. Consequently any reference to the history of animal development or of physical beauty utterly fails to account for why we should choose the moral life. Undoubtedly the moral life has to do with relative values: but why should we prefer one value to another? Or why should we prefer one kind of conduct over another? What is it that determines our preference in such cases? And why is one preference better than another? If it be said that any particular thing is valued simply because it "functions serviceably," or works well, then "why does it do this?" may be asked with all the emphasis we can command. And what is meant by the good to which it does contribute? Why is a certain line of conduct good and another evil? It will not do to say that the good is that which adapts itself to our environment and the evil is that which interferes. Why should we wish to adapt anything to our present environment? Why not begin at the

other end of the line by disturbing our environment and making it conform to our ideal of the good?

This thought is fully developed by Sorley in his "Ethics of Naturalism." "A man might quite reasonably ask why he should adopt as maxims of conduct the laws seen to operate in nature? The end, in this way, is not made to follow from the natural function of man. It is simply a mode in which the events of the world occur; and we must, therefore, give a reason why it should be adopted as his end by the individual agent. To him there may be no sufficient ground of inducement to become a self-conscious agent in the evolution of the universe." From a purely evolutionist point of view, no definite attempt has been made to solve the difficulty. It seems really to go no deeper than Dr. Johnson's reply to Boswell, when the latter plagued him to give a reason for action: "Sir," said he, in an animated tone, "it is driving on the system of life."

We have now arrived at the point where I think it is possible to ask, may we not set ourselves directly in opposition to the stream of development which Mr. Spencer traces, instead of promoting it? and in doing so, may we not find that the things that "function serviceably" are the very things that must be overcome before it is possible for us to reach any worthy ideal of conduct? And this being true, then it must be evident to the veriest tyro in moral philosophy that we cannot possibly determine our course of conduct by that which simply fits into our environment and works well. The ideal must become the explanation of the process, and not the process the explanation of the ideal. It may be that we will have to go through the process in order to reach the ideal, but our explanation of the moral life must be from the *end* and not from the *beginning,* although it is possible to coördi-

nate this ideal with both the beginning and process so that they may serviceably contribute to a clearer understanding of the whole subject.

In view of the foregoing considerations it must be evident that the problem of science in religion must not be allowed to overshadow the problem of *religion itself*. It is possible, while explaining religion, by what is called the scientific method, to explain it all away. Indeed, that is just what those do to whom reference has already been made. They are evidently shooting at something, but as a matter of fact their success is like that of the man who shot at the porcupine. In describing the matter, the man said, "The first time I shot at it, I missed it; and the second time I shot at it, I hit it where I missed it the first time." These men take two shots at Christianity. The first is from a philosophical gun and the second from a scientific gun. The first time they shoot at it, they miss it, and the second time they shoot at it, they hit it where they missed it the first time.

It is certainly a great relief to turn away from the ethical theories of men to the plain, simple, yet comprehensive ethics of Christ. His system of ethics is practically set forth in his own personality. He exemplified what He wishes us to practise. We are no longer under the dominance of mere rules, however valuable these rules may be in themselves. We are under *Him*. Even Moses cannot teach us the full extent of our ethical obligations. Jesus gives us a summary of the law, but this is simply the *law*, no more, no less. It is certainly not the Gospel. What has been called the Golden Rule, viz., that "we must do unto others as we would have them do unto us," is, after all, not even silver; indeed, in the highest reach of ethics, it is not respectable pewter. It simply represents Judaism, and was for the Jew. For mere political purposes it is not without a certain value; but it reaches no higher than

self, and, in its application, it is easily perverted to intense selfishness.

But the teaching of Jesus is as much higher than this Jewish rule as the heavens are higher than the earth. He never taught that the Jewish rule was *his* rule, nor did He endorse that rule as the measure of ethical responsibility. He simply gave a summary of the law of Moses in which this rule was included.

However, when He comes to give us the true ethical standard, He makes his love for us that standard. We must love one another as He loved us. This at once lifts us out of ourselves into Him, for guidance and help. When we wish to know what we should do, in a given case, we have only to find out what He would do or what He would have us do in such a case. This personal reference to Him makes Him the arbiter of our actions, and not our own selfish conceptions of duty. We must do what He would do, we must love as He loved, we must walk as He walked.

Of course we must study his teaching in order to know what He would do in any given case. This teaching is not confined to any particular chapter or chapters of the New Testament. It really comprehends all the teaching of all the books of that Testament. Nevertheless, it is well to remember that a very comprehensive summary of Christ's ethical teaching may be found in the Sermon on the Mount. This sermon is full of the seeds of things. It covers nearly the whole ground of our ethical responsibilities, consequently every preacher should study this sermon most prayerfully, and at the same time he should use it constantly in guiding his people in their relations to one another. In short, it should be the Christian minister's manual for moral conduct, and he who uses this sermon wisely and well will thereby be able to do much for his hearers in stimulating them to a high attainment in the spiritual life.

XVII

THEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

It cannot be denied that during the latter half of the nineteenth century there was a decided reaction against theology. This reaction is still manifest as one of the prominent characteristic tendencies of the beginning of the twentieth century. It is probable that this tendency will develop into a dangerous extreme, for there is nothing truer in history than that extremes beget extremes. When the pendulum is lifted on one side of the point of oscillation it will certainly swing to nearly the same height on the other side when it is free to follow a well-known law of physics. The pendulum was lifted high on the side of systematic and speculative theology, during the earlier days of the nineteenth century, and when the pendulum began to swing to the other side it would not stop at the centre of oscillation, but rose to a point where theology is at a heavy discount. While this result is precisely what might have been expected, it does not indicate the very best state of things. The railing against theology has been entirely overdone, and consequently the preacher of the twentieth century has an important work to do in restoring theology to its proper place.

Let it be understood, then, that there is theology and theology. A purely speculative theology need not be encouraged. Indeed, this should be discouraged, especially when this theology is made a test of Christian fellowship. Philosophical hair-splitting, with respect to the person and attributes of either God or man, is not "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in

righteousness, that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work." But because this is true, it does not necessarily follow that Ritschlism is true. Ritschl confines theology strictly to religion, and excludes metaphysics entirely from his system of religion. He claims that the Christian knowledge of God is not scientific. With him everything is tested in religion by what he calls a Werthurtheil, meaning thereby a value-judgment. Professor Harnack, a leading representative of the Ritschl school, writes as follows: "The historian is not in a position to reckon with a miracle as a certainly given historical event; for in doing so he destroys that very method of looking at things on which all historical investigation rests. Every single miracle remains, historically, entirely dubious; and no summation of the dubious can ever amount to a certainty. If, in spite of this, the historian convinces himself that Jesus Christ has done what is extraordinary, and even in the strict sense miraculous, he argues from an ethico-religious impression which he has received of this person to a supernatural power belonging to Him. This inference belongs itself to the domain of religious faith."

It will be seen by this extract that Harnack teaches that what belongs to the domain of religious faith cannot be scientifically treated as an assured fact. But a man's religious faith cannot be kept in one compartment of the mind, dissociated from every other compartment. The mind, as a whole, is comprehended in our religious faith, as well as in everything else, and any system of reasoning that denies this fact cannot be accepted as logically correct. It is perfectly true that faith comes by hearing the Word of God, but if we have doubts concerning that word, our faith is sure to "hasten leisurely," even if it should ever come at all.

Ritschlism is therefore an extreme view of an important truth. Doubtless we should not make too much of science in theology. The speculations of the schools have resulted in much harm to the cause of Christ, but when we swing to an opposite extreme, as Ritschl has evidently done, and his followers are constantly now doing, we may well pause and ask whether we may study the deep things of God at all when we become Christians, and especially those things that clearly underlie the whole of our reasoning with respect to religious matters.

But it may be said that Ritschl does not reject theology, but only *systematic* theology, or that effort of the mind to present in a systematic form the doctrine of God. Now this view of the matter does not help the Ritschl school. It is really begging the whole question. How can we study theology at all if we do not systematise the teaching of the Bible to some extent at least? As a matter of fact we do this constantly whether we are conscious of it or not. Every well-ordered sermon is a systematic treatise upon some phase of religious truth. Every essay, discussing questions relating to Christianity, must necessarily be somewhat systematic. Indeed, the greatest difficulty with both our sermons and essays is that they are frequently wanting in the very element for which I am contending, and for this very reason they are not effective in producing conviction upon those for whom they are intended.

Unquestionably too much system may be quite as bad as too much disorder. Neither of these extremes should be cultivated by the preacher of the twentieth century. He should give attention mainly to the facts, but there are times *when* and places *where* he must deal with these facts from the standpoint of philosophy. There are laws of the mind which must be considered in all our reasoning if we wish to reach well-assured conclusions. How can we

know that we have reached an assured truth, if we do not first know that our reasoning has been correct? We do not have to study any system of logic in order to be logical. We cannot reason correctly without being logical. We must have premises which are verified, and then these must be in their proper relation to each other. Some things must be accepted as fundamental before we can reason at all. This is true in mathematics, and it is equally true in religion. The greatest German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, reckons three great fundamentals as essential to all correct reasoning, namely, God, immortality, and liberty. Theology has to do with all of these, though it may specifically deal mainly with the first.

In our present discussion I shall confine myself to those questions which properly come under Christian Theology, or the revelation of God in Christ Jesus our divine Lord. The whole of this area embraces:

(1) Christology.
(2) Anthropology.
(3) Soteriology.

These are so intimately associated that they cannot be treated separately without frequently overlapping. But for the sake of clearness, it may be well for us to consider each one of these in the order just mentioned.

(1) Christology. We may study the person and work of Christ from many points of view; but it will be sufficient for our present purpose to consider (a) the Incarnation; (b) the Atonement, and (c) the Offices of Christ as a Prophet, Priest, and King.

(a) The doctrine of the incarnation is fundamental in Christianity. The Scriptures clearly teach that Christ entered this life from another. Many passages of Scripture fix the fact definitely, as well as those which describe circumstantially his advent into this world. Some of these

passages may be consulted with profit in reference to this matter. Philippians ii. 5-9 asserts that Christ Jesus existed "in the form of God" and that He gave up this and "took the form of a servant, coming to be in the likeness of men." That is He "emptied himself" of the glory which He had prior to entering humanity, and then in his new state He "humbled himself and became obedient even to the death of the cross." Galatians iv. 4 asserts that "when the fulness of time had come, God sent forth his son, born of a woman, born under the law." In 2 Corinthians viii. 9 it is declared that "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich," and consequently reference is made here to his antecedent existence. The fourth Gospel is even more emphatic if possible with respect to this doctrine of incarnation. John i. 1-15. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not. There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light. There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of

God. And the word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth."

Now it is clearly stated in this quotation from the Apostle John that the Word became human and dwelt among men, though the manner or process by which the Word became flesh is not indicated nor is any reference made to this anywhere in John's Gospel. This Gospel makes no reference to his supernatural birth, but asserts his divinity entirely apart from that birth. Nevertheless, there is no part of the New Testament which more fully and emphatically sets forth the preëxistence of Jesus. Take such expressions as the following: "I came forth, and I am come from God; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me." "I came forth from the Father, and I am come into the world"; again, "I leave the world and go to the Father," "Before Abraham was I am," "Glorify thou me with the glory that I had with thee before the world was."

These quotations are sufficient to prove, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that the New Testament at least teaches the doctrine of the incarnation. Nor does it seem possible for any one to deny this doctrine without practically setting aside some of the plainest passages and facts of the Bible. Nevertheless, there seems to be just now a growing tendency to at least regard with suspicion any interpretation of the Scriptures which requires a supernatural birth of Jesus. The rationalistic or extreme scientific school of this age refuses to accept the fact of the incarnation because it requires belief in the supernatural. But why should any one who believes in the existence of God doubt the supernatural? and how can any one, even on rational grounds, regard the existence of a God as improbable? After all, may it not be that the difficulty at this point arises from

the fact that in our conceptions of the natural and supernatural we have separated them by an impassable gulf. Is it not true that they lie very close together and at many points actually touch each other, as light and darkness, as the different kingdoms of nature, and as even the body, soul, and spirit? We cannot fathom to the depth of a question like the incarnation, but we can see far enough to understand that there is nothing at all improbable in what is stated about it. If God be what He is represented to be in the Bible, then it is not difficult to believe that He could manifest himself in human form without any infringement of natural law whatever. There may be a sphere above what we now know of natural law which would admit easily all that is claimed for the incarnation. The transference of one life into another is really one of the fundamental facts of Christianity. According to the Apostle Paul the Christian's life is not his own life, but the life of Christ in him. Christ dwells in the Christian, and the latter becomes what he is through the inflow of the life from without.

This view of the Apostle is supported by all the facts recorded in the New Testament, as well as by the personal experience of every Christian; and this being true, it follows that the incarnation of God in Jesus the Christ is no more a mystery than the incarnation of God in a Christian. Indeed the former was simply preparatory to the latter. God manifest in the flesh, in the person of Jesus Christ, was the first step necessary to the enshrining of God in humanity through each redeemed son and daughter of humanity. So that there is nothing at all improbable, and certainly nothing impossible, in the transference of divinity from the spiritual world into the fleshly, or material world. It is easy to create difficulties with respect to almost anything, and it is not impossible to

create apparently insurmountable difficulties with regard to matters entirely beyond our comprehension. Our measuring line is too short to enable us to determine what God can do. He who could create this universe with all it contains, need not be limited with regard to the modes of his manifestation to the inhabitants of this earth, and it is the supremest nonsense, if not the most unpardonable irreverence, for any one to assume that God cannot enter human flesh if He chooses so to do.

However, it may help us who may have difficulties with this problem to suggest that possibly we have assumed in our reasoning that God and man are more widely separated than they are. I think the Scriptures teach that there is a striking likeness between them, and that they are in many respects closely allied to each other. We must never forget that man was created in the image of God. This implies more than has generally been conceded. Just how much it implies may not be easily determined. Probably it indicates that man is like God in all that makes him a man, and if this be true the step by which divinity was transferred to humanity may have comprehended little more than the step across sin which now separates God and man. This step was taken in the case of Jesus Christ by providing conditions which enabled Him to become flesh without assuming any taint of sin which may belong to the human race. In any case it is certain that before He could become an acceptable sin offering it was necessary for Him to possess the characteristics of an offering that would be acceptable to God. One of these characteristics involved a life without sin, and this is precisely what was true of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now the problem of Christ's sinlessness will help us to solve the problem of the incarnation. Is it not quite as easy to believe in the New Testament account of his advent

into the world as to believe that He was entirely without sin during the whole of his earthly life? The same New Testament that declares one declares the other also; and so far as human experience goes, the latter is quite as far removed from the facts of human history as the former is. Now, if we reject the testimony with respect to his birth, why not also reject the testimony with respect to his life? However, it is the habit of certain semi-sceptics to laud the latter while they utterly repudiate the former. But if the New Testament is credible with respect to one, why is it not credible with respect to the other? At any rate it is certain that when we throw suspicion upon the record concerning the peculiar conditions of the earthly advent, we must of necessity throw suspicion also upon every other fact which the New Testament records, and especially when that fact contains a suggestion of the improbable. Undoubtedly the sinlessness of Jesus, when compared with the life of men generally, is as much a miracle as the incarnation by the Holy Spirit.

There is, however, in the whole story of the incarnation and in its transcendent facts a special fitness to the end in view which does much to help our faith where it might hesitate without this philosophical suggestiveness. The incarnation does not necessarily limit the activity of God in the universe to the person of Jesus Christ any more than the Christian Church limits his activity at the present time; and yet, He dwells in that church, and is an essential part of that church, if we are to believe the Scriptures.

Jesus was both divine and human. This compound character was essential to the mission upon which He visited the earth. A mediator must be the friend of both parties who are to be reconciled. Jesus was therefore both God and man, entering into sympathy with both parties, uniting

in himself both divinity and humanity. Up to the time of his coming human history demonstrated at least two things: first, that every experiment in which God attempted to govern the world by his own sovereign authority resulted in a practical failure. The experiment in Eden and all the experiments following, as in the case of the Jewish theocracy, finally broke down for the reason, in the second place, man never could govern himself. In this extremity the incarnation is offered as a solution of the problem. That is, when it became evident that man would not be governed by God and could not govern himself, the merciful provision was made for him to give him a governor who is both God and man—Immanuel, God with us. Hence Jesus the Christ, the son of the living God, the friend of both God and man, becomes the mediator of the new covenant, which covenant provides at the same time for the maintenance of the authority of God and the forgiveness of sins.

There is still another view of the incarnation which may help our weak faith when it stumbles at philosophy. We must remember that the whole course of Providence, down through the ages, from Adam to Christ, was a preparation of the world for the Coming One, Whose coming would fulfil all the prophecies, and at the same time meet all the conditions necessary to restore the image of God to fallen man. In the person of Christ the gulf which had long separated God and man was practically bridged over, and a pathway of holiness erected by which all who will accept the word of reconciliation can return to the favour and fellowship of the living God.

From this point of view the incarnation may be regarded as the crowning glory of all the ages, and as the consummation of all the types and shadows of Jewish history, as well as the proclamation to the race of a possible glorious end

to the long night of darkness which has been the result of the reign of sin in the world.

Of course it is impossible to treat a subject so profound and so far-reaching as the incarnation is, within the space of a few paragraphs. But as it is a subject which will constantly appear in the preacher's experience, it is well for him to be furnished with at least a few suggestions that will help him to meet some of the difficulties which modern thinkers are frequently obtruding in the way of a robust faith. No one can possibly fathom the whole depth of the incarnation. But in this respect it is not different from many other things. We cannot fathom the mystery of ourselves. The union of body, soul, and spirit in every man is, from our point of view, quite as inexplicable and mysterious as the union of God and man in the person of Jesus Christ. Why then should we believe in one and not believe in the other?

(b) The reconciliation. I use the term reconciliation to represent what is generally understood by the atonement, for the reason that it is a better word to express the original idea. It is also more in harmony with our modern use of words. At the same time it is well not to make too much of a mere definition. It is rather remarkable that the New Testament very seldom, if ever, attempts to define a word which it uses. The nearest approach to this is in the first verse of the eleventh chapter of Hebrews where the Apostle gives us something like a definition of faith. The writers simply employ words in their current acceptation, and leave the reader to determine their meaning by the context in which they are placed. Reconciliation is a fine word, but even it has been abused, while the word atonement has been made to mean almost everything, as well as practically nothing. There is probably as much need for a new terminology in theology as there is for anthing else. In the

proper place I may have something to say about this, and urge its importance on your attention.

Meantime let us give close attention to the teaching of the Bible with respect to the great doctrine of the reconciliation as it is set forth, not only in the types and shadows of Jewish dispensation, but also in the facts of the Gospel and in the teaching of the New Testament. It is very important to emphasise the doctrine now under consideration for the reason that in much of the preaching of recent years the doctrine of the cross has had little place, and in some instances it has been regarded as simply an apostolic addition to the Gospel, without any authority from the divine master. Of course this definite repudiation of the preaching of the cross, in the depths of its meaning, is confined to comparatively few pulpits; and yet, there are many pulpits where the doctrine is so emasculated as to mean little more than is meant by those who attach to it practically no consequence whatever. It is, therefore, all-important for the preacher of the twentieth century to equip himself well for the defence and proclamation of the whole Gospel, which embraces not only Christ in his living personality, but also Christ crucified, Christ buried, and Christ risen from the dead. The preacher's mission is not primarily to educate the people. He does this, if he performs his whole duty; indeed, he must do this in order that he may carry out the whole commission under which he is serving his Divine Lord. But there is something in that commission which is emphatically central, and without which everything else falls to pieces. That central thing is the Gospel; and it is this that the preacher must carry into all the world and preach to every creature. The preaching of this Gospel is associated with other things, but these other things do not in any respect invalidate the specific character of the Gospel itself.

In the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians the Apostle tells us just what the facts of the Gospel are; and the first fact he declares to be "how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." Now it seems to me that it is impossible to preach the Gospel without including the death of Christ for our sins according to the Scriptures. Indeed, this fact is not only first in the order given by the Apostle, but so far as sin is concerned, it is first also in importance, for it is this death of Christ that meets the case of our sins; and certainly the great object of the Gospel is, first of all, to save men from their sins. This was the distinctive mission of Christ to the world. He came to seek and to save the lost. Salvation, then, is the great purpose of the Gospel, and this can be secured only through the forgiveness of our sins. This fact makes the cross of Christ paramount in the Gospel scheme, and consequently the preacher cannot ignore or minimise the supreme importance of Calvary in his pulpit ministrations.

Nevertheless, it is well to have a correct view of the cross, so as not to use this one element of the Gospel out of all proportion to the other elements. Everything in the Gospel is important, and in its right place it should be regarded as part of the divine scheme for the redemption of man.

Of course it is freely admitted that the doctrine of the reconciliation has been sadly abused. But nearly everything has been abused. We must not surrender the doctrine itself because it has been made to stand for a false theory. Far better is it that we should seek to rescue the doctrine from false teaching, and restore it to the position which it was intended to occupy by the New Testament writers. What, then, is the teaching of these writers on the subject of the reconciliation or atonement?

In a brief notice, such as I am now compelled to give, it

is impossible to discuss even the most obvious phases of this great question. All I can hope to do at present is to warn the preacher against some very glaring false views and urge upon him the necessity of studying this whole subject for himself, and let this study be done as much as possible from a Bible point of view.

At the very beginning of what I have to say it is desirable to guard against a very seductive, but not adequate, theory concerning this whole matter. That theory is that there is no theory of the atonement at all. Those who hold this view of the matter tell us that a subject so profound as the atonement is, should be left alone just where the Scriptures leave it, and no one should even attempt to formulate any view of the matter which involves any theory of the atonement whatever. But did it ever occur to these remarkable philosophers that they themselves have a theory of the atonement and constantly preach it, whether they are conscious of it or not.

In the first place this theory that we must have no theory is itself profoundly speculative, and is really the quintessence of agnosticism, and is, therefore, a theory concerning the atonement. It assumes that we do not understand the rationale of it at all, and, indeed, cannot understand it, and that therefore all the preacher can do is to proclaim what the Scriptures teach, and not attempt in any way to explain what the Scriptures mean. Now this may be a very convenient way to get rid of a weighty responsibility, but this way of disposing of the matter will probably not be satisfactory to most people who are accustomed to think a little below the surface of things, and consequently no well-equipped preacher for his pulpit work ought to seek to get rid of a somewhat difficult problem in any such lazy and irresponsible fashion.

But as a matter of fact no one does really dispose of

the question in any such summary manner. There is probably not one preacher in a thousand who acts in any such way as has been indicated. It is true that many may not be conscious of holding any particular theory of the reconciliation, but this does not prove that they really have no theory. Indeed, we cannot quote the language of Scripture without conveying to ourself and to our hearers some meaning to the language we use, or else we are practically speaking in an unknown tongue. For example, when I quote the language of the Apostle, where he says "how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures," do I not at once introduce the whole subject of the reconciliation, as related to our sins, and also to the Scriptures? The very moment I begin to enforce this passage upon the attention of my hearers that very moment do I begin to formulate a theory or philosophy of the atonement. Hence all the talk about leaving the subject in the Scriptures without any theory with regard to it, is wholly unworthy of men who think, and is scarcely allowable in the case of an A-B-C-darian in Theology.

The difficulty is not that men should theorise with respect to the atonement or with respect to anything else. The child is a philosopher just as soon as it begins to speak. It often asks the most profound questions, while its answers to its own questions are sometimes very remarkable. We cannot help being philosophers though we may not know much about philosophy. We need not trouble ourselves because we have a theory of the atonement. We cannot deal with the subject at all unless we do have a theory. Our theorising is not the point of difficulty. *We must not make our theories with regard to it, or anything else in the religion of Christ, into an iron bedstead by which we try the dimensions of other people's faith.* Every preacher should be an expounder of the Word of God. Of

course there are in this word both deep and shallow places. The reconciliation is undoubtedly one of the deep places, and any philosophy put forth with respect to it should be stated with great caution and with much reverence; and should certainly not be regarded by him who states it as the last word that can be said on the subject. Nevertheless, it is highly probable that even the most uncultured evangelist, who attempts to preach the Gospel at all, makes his most effective plea when he presents some distinctive and definite theory of this very subject now under consideration.

Another fact ought to be at once admitted by everyone who deals with this subject at all. That fact is the profound depth and comprehensive character of the atonement. Now it is quite possible that no one will be able to explain the whole height and depth, length and breadth of this great subject. But because this is the case, it does not follow that we may not form a theory that will be true as far as it goes, even though it only deals with the surface of the great theme of the reconciliation. Perhaps it is just here where so many have stumbled with respect to all theories concerning the atonement. These thinkers have been unable to comprehend everything that is in it, and consequently they have rejected all theorising concerning it on that account. This is neither good sense nor good religion. We cannot fathom the depths, length, and breadth of God, but we seek to know as much of Him as we can know, and we all have our theories concerning Him, though it is neither wise nor good to make these theories into unalterable creeds by which to test the faith of other people. The preacher, then, should study all subjects, however profound these subjects may be, but he should be careful not to write *Ne plus ultra* on any of his deductions.

Having now cleared the way, I will try to get into your

minds a definite idea of what the reconciliation is, and what it means in the plan of salvation.

Undoubtedly the crucial point in this discussion is sin. This is what separates God and man. No wonder, then, that the Scriptures teach the necessity of dealing with sin in order to bring about a reconciliation of God and man. At present it matters not where this enmity begins nor where it ends. That there is enmity between God and man cannot be doubted by those who believe the Scriptures, and that this enmity is caused by sin is equally apparent to the most casual reader of the Word of God.

How, then, must sin be dealt with? There are only three conceivable ways by which it could be treated, as has been already intimated in another chapter.

In the first place it could be *let alone.* This course would have ended in irretrievable ruin to the race. This expedient would have been practically just equal to the leaving of sin to work out its own destruction, but by so doing it would have destroyed not only man but probably also the harmony of the entire universe. No one can possibly foretell what would have been the awful consequences had sin been left alone to work out its logical results. This expedient therefore could not certainly meet the case. In the second place *sin could be punished.* That is precisely what was done with sin throughout the ages from the fall of Adam to the coming of Christ. Punishment was even God's method for dealing with sin during the Patriarchal and Jewish dispensations. But this method did not meet the whole case. It restrained sin to some extent. It limited its ravages, but it did not cure the disease. The law itself, which was added because of transgression, only restrained sin, circumscribed its influence, while the punishment which followed the transgression of this law did little more than add terror to the law and thereby increase

its sanctions. But as a final remedial agent the law was weak, on account of the weakness of the flesh, as Paul states it, and therefore could not do what was necessary to be done in order to bring in an everlasting righteousness, which would secure the believer against ultimately certain failure in the risen life. Punishment of sin did not put sin away; it certainly did not meet the whole case.

Third; *sin could be pardoned.* This is the problem involved in the reconciliation. Stated in the style of the Apostle, the problem to be solved was, how can God be just and at the same time the justifier of him who believes in Jesus? Or to put it in another form, how can God honour his own law which condemns sin which is the transgression of the law, and at the same time pardon the sinner who has broken that law? This is the real problem in the atonement. Can we understand its solution so that our reason as well as our faith may be satisfied?

I do not propose to discuss the various theories of the atonement which have more or less held place in the history of the church. This would occupy too much time, and would perhaps, not be very profitable to any of my hearers. However, there is a somewhat modern view of the subject which needs to be exposed in order that we may have a clear conception of just what the reconciliation is, and what it means to a lost and ruined world. I refer to that view which practically eliminates, or else heavily discounts, *the death of Christ* as the central fact in the reconciliation. This view gives to the life of Christ the chief place in the reconciliation. In fact it makes everything atone that is connected with Christ's mission to the earth.

But we do not reason about anything else in this way. When we come to the Lord's table to commemorate the dying love of our Lord Jesus Christ we do not destroy the specific character of that service because the life that He

lived gives it validity, sacredness, and power. Of course the death of Christ would have no potency whatever, in meeting the case of our alienation from God, if He was not what He claimed to be. But there is evidently in the New Testament something that is distinctly affirmed to be the reconciliation as distinguished from the life of Christ. Let us hear what the Apostle Paul says on this very question in the fifth chapter of his letter to the Romans, and tenth verse. "For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life." Here we have unmistakably both the death and life of Christ brought into view and distinctly differentiated, and each placed in relation to the particular result which is to be effected. Reconciliation is undoubtedly effected by the death of Christ, while our salvation is secured by his life. Nothing could be more specific as regards these two facts than what is stated in this verse. Our enmity to God is overcome and healed by the death of his Son, while our salvation is assured in the fact that He who was dead is alive for evermore. Nothing could be more definite than this teaching of the Apostle, and nothing could be more comforting than the great truth which it formulates.

Let it, then, be distinctly understood that the reconciliation is the death of Christ for our sins, and not his life, or anything else connected with his mission to the world, except so far as his death, in its efficacy, must be determined by what He was and what He continues to be.

Finally, what is the meaning of this death, or how does it effect the reconciliation of God and man?

Let us at once reject all such notions as that God was angry with the world and that the death of Christ was necessary in order to appease this anger. Until we do reject such notions we certainly cannot understand the

meaning of such statements of Scripture as that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him shall not perish but have everlasting life." According to this Scripture the death of Christ was because God loved the world, not because He was angry with it or hated it. Doubtless God hated sin, but He loved the sinner. The reconciliation has to do first of all with sin, and not with the sinner. Sin is declared to be the transgression of the law. Now the law was angry, so to speak, and may be said to have hated the sinner because the sinner had transgressed it. It was God's law; He had made it, and this law required the death of the transgressor. Now the problem of the reconciliation was simply, how can God vindicate his own righteous law and at the same time be merciful to the transgressor? This problem was solved by the death of Christ. What the law required He met, and in everything He provided for the love of God to be made manifest in the salvation of every soul that accepts the sacrifice which Christ made on the cross.

This is the whole heart as well as head of the reconciliation. In this reconciliation God seeks to pardon sin instead of punish it, or let it alone to run its riotous course. Hence the cross, or rather the word of the cross, becomes henceforth the power to heal the nations. No wonder the Apostle Paul said, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world."

Before closing this brief consideration of the reconciliation it may be well for a moment to look at the human side of this great subject. Undoubtedly there is a human side to it. God and man must coöperate in any scheme of redemption which can be regarded as worthy of divine origin. Hence no expedient for the salvation of men is

worth a single thought which does not recognise the importance of man to be consulted with respect to the terms submitted in the word of reconciliation. This would seem to be clearly implied in the very fact that the Gospel must be proclaimed to men for their acceptance or rejection. Evidently the full benefits of the death of Christ do not accrue to the sinner until he has accepted the terms of salvation offered in the Gospel. These terms are plainly indicated in the Gospel message itself. The sacrifice of Christ makes it possible for God to pardon the sinner and restore him to divine favour, but this great result is conditioned upon the sinner's voluntary and earnest acceptance of the terms proposed on the part of God. These terms comprehend at least faith, repentance, and baptism, the last setting forth in outward form the first two, and at the same time expressing in a definite act the acceptance by the penitent believer of Jesus as Lord and Christ.

As a further proof that the reconciliation must be accepted upon the part of men before it can be efficacious in their salvation, it needs only to be said that in all the Scriptures referring to the subject they make it evident that now at least men are to be reconciled to God and not God reconciled to men. Whatever needed to be done on the divine side in order to effect a reconciliation between God and man was done when Christ died for our sins, and now the call is to men, and they are urged to be reconciled to God; and in order to this great end the Word of reconciliation, or the Gospel, is to be preached so that men everywhere may have the opportunity to accept or reject the grace of God which is offered through Jesus Christ our Lord.

From this point of view the contemplative, earnest soul must be almost overwhelmed by at least two great consider-

ations: first, the marvellous love of God in giving his Son to die for us that we might be brought back to Him into the fellowship which was lost through man's disobedience; and second, the great responsibility which has been placed upon man by giving him the privilege to choose for himself whether he will or will not accept the mercy which God offers through the Gospel. While standing at the cross, with its true vision before our eyes, we both rejoice and tremble in view of the matchless love which the reconciliation displays and the awful responsibility which it enjoins upon us.

(c) Jesus in his offices. I have already noticed briefly the importance of the preacher's taking Jesus as his great teacher. I have also indicated with special emphasis his great office as intercessor for sinful men. It only remains that I should now say a few words with respect to his Lordship or Kingship, as this is the particular office of Christ which seems to come in conflict with the modern view of the world.

It is very difficult to bring men to recognise the supreme authority of Jesus as King. They are willing to concede to Him supremacy as a teacher, and many are not unwilling to own his priestly office, but practically at least it is to be feared that even many professing Christians do not fully recognise his Lordly or Kingly authority.

It is at this point where the preacher will find his chief difficulty in dealing with men. He will find that many will not accept of Christ's teaching as the final source of appeal in reference to either faith or conduct, and especially as regards the latter. Of course I do not mean that men, and especially Christian men, will very generally, definitely, and formally reject the authority of Jesus as Lord and Christ, but they will, nevertheless, practically ignore his teaching, or else attempt to explain it away so

that it really means little or nothing in deciding what should be done in any given case; and yet, nothing is clearer in the New Testament than that his word should be final with every loyal subject of his Kingdom.

Having looked the whole ground over carefully I am decidedly of the opinion that this failure to accept heartily all that is implied in the Kingship of Jesus is both the root and centre of the feeble faith and half-consecrated life of nearly all who to-day profess to be followers of our Divine Lord. When the preacher has overcome this semi-infidelity in his church he will have gained a position from which he will be able to solve almost any other difficulty, which may come up in his experience with his people.

(2) Anthropology.—It is still true, as it was in the days of Alexander Pope, that mankind is the proper study of man. Of course this statement should embrace mankind in all of its relations. If man was created only a little lower than God, it is easy to see how important it is to study man in his creation, history, and final destiny.

Doubtless one reason why the subject of Anthropology has been somewhat confused, in the evolution of theological systems, arises from the fact that men have begun their study of man from the theological point of view rather than from the anthropological point of view. Indeed theology itself cannot be mastered unless we begin the study of it from the standpoint of man. Man's first acts of consciousness are with respect to himself, and he must reason from these to his consciousness of other things. Anthropology, therefore, is a most important branch of theology, for the reason that we cannot study the latter at all unless we associate with it the former. God and man cannot be separated in the history of the human race, and consequently the very creation of man is an important

element when we come to inquire what is man, and what are the facts of his history.

It is probable that it is not necessary to give special emphasis to the fact that the New Testament recognises a trichotomy with respect to man; that is, he is composed of body, soul, and spirit, or of a physical, animal, and spiritual nature. While this trichotomy was faintly adumbrated in the Hebrew psychology it was certainly not very vigorously emphasised, since it was a habit of the Hebrews to occasionally use the same word to represent both body and soul. This was probably due to the fact that the body and soul were almost certainly of contemporaneous creation, while it is equally certain that the spiritual nature of man was conferred upon him some time after man was a psychical being. At any rate philosophers have generally divided man into body and soul, the latter standing for everything above the mere physical.

Of course in this our psychologists have followed Plato rather than the New Testament, and consequently for the sake of exactness in definition it will be both convenient and intelligible, as well as highly suggestive, for the preacher to stick to the Scriptural trichotomy instead of the Platonic dichotomy. Strictly speaking, therefore, we may regard man as composed of body, soul, and spirit, or, in other words, we may regard him as man Physical, man Psychical, and man Pneumatical. This classification brings into prominent view the spiritual nature of man, which is doubtless the most predominant fact concerning what man really is, as well as what he is yet to be. If redeemed man does not wear the image of God, and if he is not to live forever, then it seems to me that the salvation through Christ and the revelation as regards the future are surely without sufficient inspiration to encourage any one to trouble about them.

It is not now proposed to discuss the various theories which have been propounded with respect to man's immortality. Any adequate discussion of these theories would make a large volume, and consequently no attempt will be made to discuss them at all. However, it may be helpful to us if we spend a moment to inquire what would certainly happen to man when he fell from his first estate? It will be noticed that I am using the popular style of presenting this matter and it may appear in the sequel that there was decidedly a fall in one respect at least. Let us examine this matter entirely without prejudice, and then I hope the conclusion which is reached will help us to understand the whole subject of Anthropology.

It is certainly a very remarkable fact, but it is a fact all the same, that the fall of man was occasioned by exciting a conflict among the different parts of his nature. When the divine image was conferred upon him, or when he received his spiritual endowment, this was the crown of his tripartite nature, and consequently was at the top, so to speak, controlling all and bringing all in subjection to it.

Now it is curious and interesting to notice that the real attack upon this harmonious development of man was made at the centre, that is, through his animal nature, and in order to success one of the animal kingdom was used by Satan to accomplish man's overthrow. The temptation was really an effort on the part of the animal to gain supremacy over the spiritual. Its final success was in placing the animal at the top, in regal authority, and the spiritual underneath, in subjection to the animal. Whatever else may have happened through the temptation, this much certainly did happen—the animal went up and the spiritual went down. The marks of this conflict may be seen everywhere in history. Men have deen dominated by the animal ever

since the success of the serpent in Eden. Even the nations of the earth take for their symbols some animal. America uses the eagle, Great Britain the lion, Russia the bear, etc. What is true of nations is equally true of individuals. In Flaubert's great novel entitled "Salammbo," he has definitely introduced the python in the story of Salammbo's fall, and this python is but an echo of the serpent in the Garden of Eden. In each case it is the struggle between the spiritual and animal, and in each case the animal wins the battle, and this will always be the case in the struggle without divine assistance. In the letter to the Romans the Apostle Paul tells us that he was constantly passing through a similar struggle, and doubtless a similar result would have followed in his case had it not been for the fact that in his struggle he received help from our Lord Jesus Christ. Just here we touch the real secret of the Christian's triumph. He can do all things through Christ who strengthens him, but without this strength he would be an easy victim through his animal nature, which is still struggling for supremacy, even in the case of Christians whose spiritual natures have been resurrected into a newness of life and again placed in regnancy over the soul and body.

Have we a suggestion in the facts already stated that will help us to unlock the mystery of man's present condition? We need no argument to convince us that we are in a great struggle wherein evil and good are constantly in conflict. The Apostle Paul's experience is the experience of all of us; when we would do good, evil is present. Many of us have also realised the same deliverance which he says took place in his case. He found deliverance only in Christ Jesus the Lord, and this must necessarily be our only way to victory; and this being the case, the preacher will find in this fact a great leverage power with which to lift up his people into a higher life. The cross specially

appeals to our consciousness of helplessness. On the outside it is repulsive. It was a stumbling block to the Jew and foolishness to the Greek, but to those who are saved it has always been and always will be both the power of God and the wisdom of God. On its exterior side it is darkness and death; when we come to its inner meaning it is life and light. In the shadow of the cross there is revealed the effulgence of God's infinite love, for the brightness of this love is made specially manifest in the dark background of the cross.

What then shall we say to these things? Is it true that evil had to triumph for a while in order that good might ultimately triumph? Surely this is not the meaning of the Scripture teaching on this subject. It cannot be denied that evil did triumph for a while, and we are clearly assured that good will finally win a great victory; but these facts do not warrant the conclusion that the fall of man was necessary, or that God is in any way the author of evil except so far as He has permitted evil to exist. Why He has permitted it to exist may not be very evident to even the wisest philosopher. Nevertheless there is a suggestion, in the facts stated, which may help us to solve the problem before us. Could man have achieved his liberty in any other way than by the method he adopted? Up to the time of eating the forbidden fruit he was simply negatively good. The prohibition kept him in this state. His goodness consisted in refraining from evil. It was simply the goodness which comes by legal restrictions.

But this was not the kind of man which God had in view in the making of him. While man was finished, so far as his creation was concerned, he is still in the process of making. The tragedy in Eden was overruled so as to contribute to this process. The ground was cursed, but it was for man's sake. He was cast out of the garden into

the world of conflict, so that this conflict might hammer him into the shape desired by his creator. This hammering process has been attended by much suffering and disaster, but, after all, it is the only way by which the pure gold of character can possibly be made manifest. It is by the cross that we reach the crown. Possibly it may be said in truth that man achieved his liberty by disobeying God, but the price of this liberty was death. This is still the price of liberty. Nations have had to pay this price as individuals have done; and this will perhaps be the case as long as the struggle continues which was precipitated by the fall of man in Eden.

Just here we touch a very important fact. The modern view of the world largely tends to minimise the exceeding sinfulness of sin. But this extreme conclusion is reached mainly because our modern thinkers do not distinguish between sin and its results. Sin itself must always be hateful to him who cannot look upon it with the least allowance. But, after all, the effects of sin may be remedial in their influence. In our *Materia Medica* there are many poisons that are used as remedies in curing disease. They are no less poisons because, taken in certain quantities, their final effect is curative. Precisely so it is with sin. It is itself a terrible poison, but its effects may be overruled and circumscribed so that the very disasters which sin produces may contribute to final good. But however this may be, it is undoubtedly certain that sin is here and its effects all around us, and whoever is wise will not shut his eyes to this fact, but will seek to do all in his power to alleviate the suffering which sin produces by overruling its effects in the interest of good.

One thing, however, should be noticed at this point in order that we may have an adequate conception of the fall and its consequences. The word knowledge in the

statement concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil meant much more than is usually meant by that word. It was an experimental knowledge which Adam had. He knew the difference between good and evil from the effect upon his own life. Indeed, knowledge which does not come from personal experience is never satisfactory. Very few are willing to take the testimony of others with respect to the result of any particular course of conduct. Most people must test the matter for themselves. They must actually eat of the forbidden fruit, taste its quality, and realise its effects in order that they may be satisfied. This fact stands right in the way of the formation of character, and yet it may contribute to the highest development of character. We say that experience is a great teacher, though it is often very costly. A burnt child dreads the fire; but perhaps no persuasion could keep the child from testing the quality of the fire. We think we must eat for ourselves the forbidden fruit in order that we may gain the real knowledge of experience. Anyway, while Adam paid dearly for this experimental knowledge, God mercifully now overrules pain, sorrow, and disaster, which came through man's disobedience, so that all these may contribute to man's final triumph and glorification. Thus it is ever true that

> "From seeming evil He's still educing good,
> And better thence again, and better still,
> In infinite progression."

It is scarcely necessary to say that the preacher will meet with many objections to Christianity that are neither modern nor sensible. Indeed, no objection to Christianity can be sensible, for the reason that Christianity is in harmony with the whole nature of man as he now is and as he is to be. Nevertheless, the faithful minister must not

entirely ignore even quibbles with respect to the faith, and especially when these have a popular currency. One of these he will meet very frequently, and it will be necessary for him to show its absurdity, and consequently its irrelevancy, even when it is almost a humiliation of intellect to do so.

He will meet those who will tell him that they had no election in the matter of their environment, as to whether they should be born in a Christian land or a heathen land, and therefore they feel no responsibility for their faith, as to whether they believe in Christianity or not. They do not think that God will punish them for their conduct with respect to the faith, no matter what that conduct may be; consequently they feel no personal responsibility as regards the matter, and so dismiss it entirely from their minds.

Now, it is difficult to believe that any one can be very serious in presenting such a shallow reason for rejecting the Gospel. Still, it must be confessed that not a few find this a convenient hiding place to shield them from the searching rays of Gospel light.

It is almost unnecessary to say that by parity of reasoning it is easy to show that no one is responsible for any kind of conduct. The thief had no election in determining whether he should be born in the country that prohibits stealing or in a country where might makes right. It is no doubt true that environment exerts a large influence in determining character, but it is equally true that all parts of that environment must be taken into consideration when we are estimating the results. If one is born in a Gospel land, that very fact is an important element in the estimate we make of his responsibility. The more light we have, the more responsibility. If our lives have been cast in pleasant places we ought to be thankful for this, and we ought also to be willing to meet the additional responsi-

bility which rests upon us because we have been thus favoured.

Akin to the foregoing ridiculous objection is that which claims that as God made us and placed us here in this world, He and He alone is responsible for what we are and what we must be. Now this objection assumes that man is an automaton—a mere machine which acts only as it is acted upon. But man is something nobler than that. The very privilege of choice, to which I have already called attention, is itself a magnificent endowment. It is true that this privilege may be much abused, but this can be said of all great privileges. Every right to use a thing carries with it the possibility of its abuse. It is freely admitted that God could have made a being incapable of sinning, but he would not have been a man. Indeed, he would have been practically a machine, as has already been intimated. But God did not plan to make a machine, but a man, and to make a man, in the true meaning of that term, it was necessary for him to have the power to do evil as well as good; and this is precisely the kind of being man is. The very fact that he can reject the divine will, and even challenge Omnipotence to arms, shows man's immeasurable greatness, and at once constitutes him what he is declared to be, only a little lower than God. Fatalism, therefore, has no place in a reasonable anthropology. Man in any environment is responsible for his acts, though doubtless the Divine Father will make due allowance for circumstances over which man has no control. Indeed, the Scriptures clearly teach that the final determination of character will depend much upon opportunity, and consequently no injustice will be done to any one, no matter where he may have been born or where he may have lived. But surely the man who lives in this enlightened age and in this God-favoured country will have less excuse to offer

than any other man on the face of the earth for having rejected the Gospel, when he shall be called upon to give an account for the deeds done in the body. No finespun theory, made out of philosophical speculations, nor any stubborn wilfulness can possibly avail in excusing men who live in this sunlight age and in this land of Bibles, whatever may be said in extenuation of the failure of others less favoured if they fail to accept of the Gospel of Christ. Where much is given much will be required.

(3) Soteriology.—The doctrine of salvation embraces practically the whole scheme of redemption, though for the sake of clearness it is usually treated as a separate division. In such a division we may properly confine our investigation to a few simple elementary facts and principles which are fundamental with respect to the whole matter of soteriology.

One thing is very certain, viz., the preacher will be compelled to have much to do with this subject; and some of the most difficult recurring problems, which he will be called upon to solve, may be classed in the division now under consideration. As a rule, when the unsaved have had their attention arrested by the Gospel they are not specially interested in either theology or anthropology, as these are usually treated; but they are intensely interested in the question of their salvation; and this being true, it is of the greatest importance that the preacher should be well prepared to meet such difficulties as are almost sure to rise in the minds of those who are to be instructed. Probably the very simplicity of the subject of salvation, as it is revealed in the Scriptures, is mainly responsible for the general confusion which prevails on this subject throughout Christendom.

Doubtless many think the plan of salvation, as revealed

in the Scriptures, is entirely too simple, too easily apprehended, and too easily appropriated, and consequently they have thought it necessary to amend in several respects the divine revelation. This, however, is hazardous work. Indeed, it ought to be almost self-evident that a Gospel which is to be carried into all the world and preached to every creature must be necessarily very simple in each term, as well as in its general content, in order that it may be adapted to all classes and conditions of the people. If it were a Gospel intended exclusively for the benefit of trained theologians, then we might expect something like a scientific and scholastic treatment of salvation. But as this latter class is infinitesimally small, in comparison with the great mass of humanity for which the Gospel is intended, undoubtedly we have a right to expect that divine wisdom would make the Gospel message just what it is, so easily apprehended that even the wayfaring man, though a simpleton, need not err therein.

I am emphasising the simplicity of salvation because I am sure it is precisely at this point where most preachers make a great mistake in dealing with the unconverted. The servant of Naaman was right when he reproved his master for refusing to do what God had told him just because it was a simple thing to dip seven times in the River Jordan in order to be cured of leprosy. The average man thinks that some great thing must be done for him, or rather some great demonstration of power manifested in him or around him, in order that he may be cured of sin. But this is not the divine method. Even in nature power resides in silent courses. But this very silence is an evidence of the grandeur of what is accomplished. When nature is working out her greatest results, and when her most powerful forces are brought into active exercise, then silence is always the charmed circle in which the work is

done. When spring builds her beautiful temple, covering it with tender foliage, filling it with the loveliest flowers, and painting it with the sparkling sunbeams of the morning, no sound of the axe or hammer is heard. When summer smiles and waves her thousand fields of grain; when autumn looks sad and reels beneath the ripened fruit; when winter shakes his icy locks and frost-nymphs creep to every tender shrub and nature's breath is stopped, all this and more is done; and yet no voice is heard to speak, no jarring sound breaks on the silence deep, save that which man in weakness utters, and uttering which, he dies, a thing of dust.

Nature is grace in symbol. The method of God is the same in each. Simplicity is the most comprehensive word in the divine government, as regards both physical and spiritual things. Paradoxical as it may seem, it is nevertheless true, to be simple is to be profound. Clear water reveals what is in it, even to great depths, while muddy water practically reveals nothing beyond its surface. A simple Gospel reveals the divine wisdom, power, and goodness, while a Gospel which has become a muddy stream, through human admixtures, practically reveals nothing but the weakness of human nature which seeks to improve upon what God has made.

However, in dealing with the problems which are sure to confront the preacher, with respect to soteriology, it will help him to make his work effective if he will look at the whole subject from both the divine side and the human side. While it is certainly true that the divine and human cannot be absolutely separated in the plan of salvation, nevertheless, for practical purposes, it is sometimes better to make this separation, at least in soteriology, so as to avoid confusion in the minds of those who may not readily understand all that is involved in the case.

Looked at from the standpoint of what God does in the matter of salvation, it is all-important to make it clear that every convert is the result of the Holy Spirit's agency; and yet it is probably true that nothing in connection with the salvation of souls has been more confused than the office and work of the Holy Spirit. The effort to separate its agency from the human side of this question, and to regard its work as practically independent of what men are to do themselves, as well as what instrumentalities must be used in order to the Holy Spirit's efficiency, may be regarded as among the prime factors which have contributed to much of the failure which has resulted in the efforts of Christians to convert the world. Satan could not have invented a greater hindering cause to the success of the Gospel than the false view of spiritual influence which has prevailed to a large extent throughout Christendom since the days of St. Augustine. Nor can we hope for any triumph of the Gospel commensurate with the imperative needs of humanity and the opportunities which are the special inheritance of the twentieth century until the proper relation of the Holy Spirit to the church and to the world is clearly understood and emphasised in all the pulpits of Christendom.

The preacher must distinguish between things that differ. He must not confound the indwelling of Holy Spirit in the church with the work of the Holy Spirit with respect to those who are outside of the church. Let us clearly understand a few most important things before we proceed any further.

First of all let it be distinctly understood that while we may regard the Holy Spirit as a personality, it is well to remember that the Bible does not make much of this personality, and for the most part does not emphasise it at all. It is very suggestive, I think, that the article before

the Greek *Pneuma* is used only when the spirit is considered *objectively,* and the article is never used when the spirit is considered *subjectively.* It is also true that the article is not used when reference is to the gifts, operation, or manifestations of the spirit *in men;* nor is it used when the disciples are said to be filled with the spirit, to walk in or to receive the spirit. There are a few apparent exceptions to this rule, but these are only apparent, not real.

Hence it will be seen that while the article is used in connection with the spirit when objectively considered, and while the personality of the spirit is distinctly taught in the Scriptures, it is also true that this personality is largely, if not completely, sunk when the indwelling of the spirit is under consideration. I think we may readily believe that there is a philosophical reason for this remarkable distinction, which is at least very suggestive not only as regards the carefulness with which the language of Scripture is selected, but also with regard to the reasonableness of Scriptural teaching.

Another important fact should just here be strongly emphasised. Holy spirit dwells in the church, in the preacher, and in the Word, which the preacher proclaims. Just how this indwelling takes place, no one can perhaps fully explain, any more than the union of the body, soul, and spirit can be explained; and yet the fact in one case is as self-evident as in the other. Nor must the union of the Holy Spirit in the church or in the believer be confounded with the Holy Spirit in the truth which is presented by the believer to the unconverted for acceptance. God is a God of order, not of confusion. He works by means, and so far as we know never without means. When He created the universe He used his word as the instrumentality through which his creative power was exerted. He still uses that word in the work of the new creation in Christ Jesus.

In this connection I desire to quote liberally from one of the ablest works on the Holy Spirit that has ever been written. I refer to that of Dr. Thomas W. Jenkyn, of Coward College, England. I prefer to use his language for the reason that some of his most radical utterances would be regarded as heterodox if I were to utter them myself.

Referring to the Holy Spirit in the Word, Dr. Jenkyn says: "In the Word, the influence of the Holy Spirit is now as really present as in the days of inspiration. Inspiration did not consist in the state and the feelings of the mind that was individually inspired, but it consisted in the truths or doctrines conveyed and breathed into the soul.

"The real shrine of the divine presence was not the soul of the inspired prophet or Apostle, but the truth and message in the soul, and which was expressed by the soul as it was moved by the Holy Ghost. These inspired truths were intended for the permanent use of the church, but as to the inspired souls themselves,—'the fathers, where are they?' The inspired souls that received these truths are not with us; but the truths themselves, the real shrines of the inspiring Spirit, are still with us: and the inspiring Spirit is as much in them now—they are now as much the inspirations of the ever-present Spirit,—as in the first moment of their transmission to inspired men.

"The constant and permanent presence of the saving power and influence is present in the Christian, and in the church, only as the Spirit's word, the fixed shrine of the Holy Spirit, is possessed and held by them, in its purity, and in its entireness. Where the Word is not, there the converting presence and the saving influences of the Holy Spirit are not. Where the Word is introduced, there his presence and influence are introduced. Where the Word

is rejected or lost, there his presence and influence are lost. Whosoever pretends to the influence and presence of the Holy Spirit without the Word, or against the Word, or beyond the Word, is an impostor. In the Word the influence of the Holy Spirit is ever present without fluctuation, diminution, or uncertainty: present as surely and abidingly as magnetism in the loadstone, or light in the presence of the sun, or, to use Scriptural metaphors, as vitality is in a seed, or the waters of salvation in a well. Where the Word of God dwells in a church richly, there the developments or the presence and influences of the Holy Spirit are proportionately extended and numerous. Where, in a country or community, through abounding iniquity, the Word has no place, there 'Ichabod' might be inscribed, for the divine influence, the glory, is departed. This awful fact does not consist in the presence of the Lord forsaking the Shekinah, but in the Shekinah, the shrine and symbol of the presence, leaving a people. In the Word itself, in the doctrines and duties, ordinances and institutions, of the Gospel, as in the ancient Shekinah, is the presence of God to be found, notwithstanding the conduct of men, and the church must seek it in these, not in frames and feelings, which are the mere vanes of all that is changing and transitory. While possessing the presence of the Word, infallibly calculate on the presence and saving agency of the Holy Spirit.

"The reader will please to bear in mind that we treat now of only the presence, or the seat of the presence and influences, of the Holy Spirit, and not of their developments and manifestations. Magnetism is always present in the loadstone, but its development will take place only in certain combinations. Whoever will place the magnet in these combinations, and not otherwise, can always calculate on the influence being present and active. Vitality

is always in the seed, and whoever will plant, or sow, that seed, and put it in combination with 'good ground,' may expect confidently that God will give the increase, and renew the face of the earth. With the same certainty, may the Christian church calculate on the converting presence and saving influence of the Holy Spirit being developed wherever the Word is, in the given combinations, mixed with faith in them that hear it."

In speaking of conversion the same author uses the following very suggestive language:

"On the supposition that conversion is a moral change, and not a physical transformation and metamorphosis, we cannot connect it with the agency of God, unless we trace it to the influence of motives. If conversion be some physical transformation, effected in the psychological soul, or the intellectual spirit, by a direct and immediate agency of God, it must be of course necessarily ascribed to God; but in such a case the transformation would be miraculous; and, if it be a physical miracle, it ceases to be the duty of the sinner, and therefore all contrivance and an arranged adaptation of moral means to produce it are at once destroyed; for a miracle in ethics is as much supermoral as a miracle in physics is supernatural. To illustrate the adjusted systems of divine operations, supermoral facts can be of no more use to the theologian than supernatural facts are to the philosopher. If man be the originator of his own volitions and wishes, it is difficult if not impossible to show in what way his good desires, especially his altered wishes, can be ascribed to God, or to illustrate how God can be the cause of them. Even conceding this self-determining power of the mind to be real, since in the whole world of mind there is no instance of its being exercised for Christian ends, except where Christian truth is present, to what can we ascribe its Christian determinateness at

all but to Christian motives? But, since God is the first cause of truth, and since He has revealed that He reasons with men, reproves them, renews and sanctifies them, by means of truth; when we thus ascribe the moral phenomenon to God, we are on the firmest grounds of argument, and in full harmony with every truth in the universe. Suppose a man to change his mind on a given subject in consequence of a letter received by him from a friend in India, but read to him by another person; and the query to be proposed, Who changed this man's mind? The answer would be something like the following: he himself altered his views, but this he would not have done but for the letter; he could not read the letter himself, therefore it was read to him, and the reader had an instrumental agency in his change of mind. No one can explain how this friend had influenced his mind, or how he had conveyed his influence to ink and paper. The changing influence was in the truths of the letter, yet it was not the mere influence of the truths, but the influence of his friend conveyed in those truths. This would not be moral suasion, for no other person presenting the same truths would have produced the same effects. It would not be affirmed that the honour of having changed that mind was due either to the letter, the receiver, or the reader, but to the author of the letter in India; yet he did not accomplish it without the due operation of the others in their order. Drop the letter from the links in the operation and it is impossible to trace the change to the friend in India; put it in the series, and it accounts for the whole process. Without the instrumentality of the Gospel, man, in the phenomenon of conversion, is all in all; for, if he originated or self-determined the change, he is his own saviour; or, if he was converted miraculously, his own testimony is the only evidence; but with the instrumentality of the Gospel, the

Holy Spirit alone is the author and originator of conversion."

I cannot close this important subject without making another quotation from Dr. Jenkyn's remarkable volume, under the subject entitled "Why Saving Influences Are Not More Manifested":

"No salvation can be expected where there are no means of salvation. Good men seem to understand fully the principles and operations of every other influence that comes from God, except saving influences. They know that all the physical influences that renew the face of the earth come from God, but they take care to use all means to put their farms and gardens in a position which shall be adapted to the operation of these benign energies; and they feel conscious that these influences, though present and powerful, would avail them nothing while the means were neglected by which they operate. All good men recognise also that the intellectual influences which enlarge and exalt the mind come from God; but they very laudably take good heed that, by the discipline of a wise and good education, the minds of their children be put in a right position for these influences to act upon them.

"Why does not the church act thus in its estimate of saving influences? It is because its estimate is wrong; and its estimate is wrong because it has been formed either by the traditions of theological men, instead of the commandments of God, or by the misinterpretation of Scriptural facts in the miraculous history of the Jews. The constitution of the Jewish church was a theocracy, a government by miracles, and by immediate divine interpositions. The most conspicuous penalties and rewards, in this form of government, consisted of physical evils or temporal good. Hence, for the disobedience or rebellion of the people, the Supreme Organ of the theocracy sus-

pended the physical influences of the season, commanded the clouds to rain no rain on the land, and withheld or blasted the harvests. This administration of physical influences, under the theocracy, has been applied by many Christians to the exhibition of saving influences under the official agency of the Holy Spirit. The theology of the Bible never represents the ministration of the Spirit and the exhibition of saving influences under the official agency of the Holy Spirit, as being, like the theocracy, of a miraculous character, and without the operation of means."

This reasoning may not be regarded by some as entirely satisfactory. Indeed, it is highly probable that not a few will consider it as a practical repudiation of Bible testimony. But may not this conclusion be the result of preconceived opinion rather than from an unbiassed induction of biblical teaching? Most of us know something of the influence of prejudice, and consequently we ought to know that any view of a subject contrary to our long-established opinions will probably be rejected by us without even a candid investigation. This is precisely what happens with most persons who find fault with the arguments to which attention has just been called.

At least one thing can be said for the view which has been presented. It certainly emphasises an important side of the question. It may be that the emphasis has been stated with more force than the facts will justify; but however this may be, it cannot be doubted that the opposite view of spiritual influence in conversion has been pressed so far as to come dangerously near to the point where human responsibility practically ceases. In any case it is important for the preacher while dealing with honest inquiries to at least guard well the following important facts:

(1) It is a fact that no view of spiritual influence can

be correct which does not regard both the divine and human side in the plan of salvation. There must be coöperation between God and man, or else any plan must fail.

(2) The freedom of the human will must be provided for in any view of spiritual influence which is worthy of a moment's consideration. Man must not be made a mere machine in order to give glory to God. This glory can be given only by regarding man as a reasoning being, and therefore capable of being influenced by arguments and motives rather than by incantations or impulses which can never appeal intelligently to the unconverted.

(3) The Gospel itself must be protected from any theory or philosophy which detracts from it as the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. I think the preacher ought not to limit the divine side in the plan of salvation even where revelation seems to permit him to do so; but at the same time he certainly ought not to give prominent place to theories and methods concerning which the Word of God is entirely silent. It is against these extra-revelations, or these imaginary revelations, that the preacher should make his solemn protest; and when he has done this faithfully, he may leave the question of spiritual influence just where it is left in the Holy Scriptures. These Scriptures undoubtedly teach that the Holy Spirit operates through the written Word, through the church, and through the preaching of the Gospel, but so far as any specific case is concerned, we do not find in these Scriptures anything that justifies the popular modern view that the Holy Spirit goes before the church or the Gospel and prepares the heart for the reception of the Gospel message. At any rate when the church has done its duty and the preacher has done his duty in proclaiming faithfully the Gospel in its simplicity and purity, it is certainly both wise and prudent to refuse to enter upon that unexplored region of occult

influences concerning which the Scriptures are as silent as the grave.

Doubtless the main reason why the office and work of the Holy Spirit have been confused, or else completely perverted, is owing to the fact that the whole subject of conversion has become "confusion worse confounded," owing to both a false Anthropology and a false Soteriology.

That something called conversion is taught in the Bible no one who reads aright can for a moment question; but that the public understanding of it is correct I think may be fairly doubted. There is, perhaps, no difference of opinion, at least among those who are regarded as Evangelical, as to the need of conversion. I believe that all are in harmony at that point. But when we come to consider what is really meant by conversion, then there is at once a wide divergence between the popular understanding and that view which a critical knowledge of the subject must necessarily yield. This difference may be clearly indicated by asking a few questions: Does the man convert himself, or is it something done for him? Is conversion an act of the creature or of the Creator? Or, in other words, is it a human or divine act? The popular view is that it is wholly a divine act; that the human is entirely *passive,* simply receiving what is done through divine agency. Hence, we are constantly hearing such expressions as the following: "When I was converted," "He went to the meeting, and was converted," etc., etc.; all referring to something which the subject had done for him rather than something he did himself. And this view is at least partially justified by the Authorised Version. In that Version ἐπιφρωσέ (*epistrepho*) is rendered six times by the phrase "Be ye converted," which conveys a passive signification, as if the persons referred to are finally made to

yield to some foreign influence which they were at the time resisting. But the idea of passivity is not in the original at all. The original occurs *thirty-nine* times in the New Testament, in *eighteen* of which it expresses a mere physical act of turning or returning; *nineteen* times it is used to change from evil to good, and *twice* from good to evil. In none of these cases does it ever express *passivity* of the subject. The corresponding Hebrew word (*Shawb*) is of very frequent use in the Old Testament, and almost invariably carries with it the force of activity upon the part of the subject. In Isaiah vi. 10, the Authorised Version gives a correct rendering as regards the very word under consideration. The passage reads: "Lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and convert," etc. It will be seen here that the word *convert* is in the active voice, and refers to something that the people were *themselves* to do, and not to something that was to be done *in* them or *for* them. But where this same passage is found in the New Testament, as in Matthew xiii. 15, Mark iv. 12, John xii. 40, the Authorised Version uniformly gives us a rendering which regards the subjects as entirely passive, and therefore acted upon rather than acting themselves. The Revised Version has done good service in giving a much better translation of the original; but why ἐπιστρέφω (*epistrepho*) should be rendered "turn again" in Matthew and Mark, and only "turn" in John, is certainly beyond the ken of any Greek scholar outside of the Revision Committee. Still, we must do that committee justice by heartily commending their discrimination in reference to the *voice* of the verb in these places as well as in Acts iii. 19. In this last passage the revisers have given us what is virtually a new revelation. As it stands in the Authorized Version it is really an entire perversion of the original, and has doubtless been

largely instrumental in creating in the public mind the erroneous view to which I am calling attention. It is probable that those who made the Authorised Version were influenced in this matter by the Latin Vulgate, as it uses the passive voice where every other version known to me uses the active. It is well known that King James' translators followed very closely the Latin Vulgate, and as regards *epistrepho* they followed the Vulgate slavishly. Hence it will be seen that we are indebted to the Roman Catholic Bible for one of the most blighting errors with which modern Christendom is cursed.

What, then, is the correct idea of conversion as taught in the Word of God? In answering this question it may be well to approach the final conclusion by successive steps. Let it be observed, then, first of all, that the original word everywhere represents an *act,* and in the next place that this act is *performed by the subject,* and finally that the subject by this act *turns* from his wanderings to serve the living God. Strictly speaking, therefore, conversion denotes what the sinner *does himself,* and not what is done *in* him or *for* him. It is his own act, and not the act of another. True, the whole process may comprehend several acts instead of one, as the term simply indicates the *fact* of turning rather than the steps by which this turning is accomplished. But whether many acts or one, whatever is done, so far as any act is concerned, must be regarded as done by the sinner himself. Hence the idea of passivity on his part is wholly unscriptural, and is dangerously misleading the people. I feel conscious that in thus speaking I am doing a service for the cause of truth. The popular mind is saturated with the notion that the sinner has nothing to do—can, indeed, do nothing—as he is wholly passive, and must, therefore, wait for some *irresistibilis gratia* to act for him. Thus human

responsibility is practically destroyed, while the work of saving souls is turned from its legitimate course to try expedients which are as unscriptural and dangerous as the popular view of conversion is erroneous and misleading.

Let no one misunderstand what I have said. I am simply contending for a sound speech, for I believe that this is necessary in order to create in the public mind clear conceptions of duty. I have been looking at the matter of salvation mainly from the human point of view. But there are two sides to the question from the beginning to the end, as indeed there are two sides to everything, and it has been because men have not recognised this fact that they have gone from one extreme to the other on this subject. Some have ruled out the human entirely, and consequently have set up a theory which is alike dishonouring to God and man. Of course there is a divine side as regards even conversion. There must be the motive to turn, or else the sinner is sure to continue in his downward course. The presentation of this motive is the work of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel or Word of God. This must be antecedent to any act of the sinner Godward. There must be a change of heart, or genuine repentance, before the sinner will turn. The Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, must first of all be preached to him. This Gospel the sinner must hear, and then if he believes, he should at once repent and *turn,* or, as it is expressed sometimes, repent and be baptised, for by thus putting his faith into an overt act, he is enabled to bury the old man and rise to walk a new life.

Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that the original word, which is translated conversion, never in a single instance refers to either God, or Christ, or the Holy Spirit,

as its agent. In *five* instances of the *nineteen* where it relates to a change from evil to good, a human agent is employed, as John the Baptist, Paul, or some member of the church; and in the other fourteen occurrences the agent is the person who is the subject of the change. This is a most important fact, and clearly shows that, while it is proper to say that men turn their fellow-men, it cannot be said that the subjects of this turning are themselves *passive.* Hence, strictly speaking, sinners are not said to *be* turned to the Lord, but to *turn* to Him. And it will be seen, furthermore, that while this view highly honours God for wisely devising a Gospel to meet the sinner's case, at the same time it greatly deepens human responsibility, and makes it simply impossible for any one to reject the Gospel without making his condemnation just. Hence I conclude, that while we must press upon our fellow-men the Gospel in order to *turn* them from evil to serve God, the turning itself must be the act of the *men themselves* in order that it may comprehend the Scriptural idea of conversion. There must be divine power exerted in order to influence the sinner to turn, and that power is exerted through the Gospel, but this antecedent work must not be confounded with that decisive step which the penitent believer must take himself if he would fulfil the requirements of what the original word means, as well as what the apostolic practice was as regards the matter of conversion.

As a matter of fact there are a number of instrumentalities employed in the salvation of the sinner, and the Bible clearly recognises these instrumentalities. We are not said to be saved by any one thing alone, but by a number of things in coöperation. The Scriptures clearly teach that God saves us, and that we are begotten of God; also, that the grace of God saves us, etc. But would it be

legitimate to conclude from these statements of Scripture that nothing else has to do with our salvation? Surely we would not wish to exclude the work of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit because the Scriptures ascribe salvation, first of all, to the love of the Divine Father. How, then, are we to understand the matter? I think there is no difficulty in the case whatever. Evidently, when the Scriptures ascribe salvation to any *particular* person or thing, they do not necessarily *exclude* other persons or things which may be mentioned in the same connection or in other parts of the Word of God.

The Scriptural method is very natural and very simple. It depends upon the *point of view* from which the divine writer is contemplating the subject as to the agency or instrumentality he may name. If he is aiming to emphasise the originating or moving cause of our salvation, he will unquestionably call attention to the love of God and the grace of God. But if he wishes to direct special attention to the procuring cause of our salvation, he will dwell upon the great sacrifice for sin and uncleanness which Christ made upon the cross, and he will rightfully call attention to the fact that it is through his blood we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins. But if the point of view occupied by the divine writer is the work of the Holy Spirit, then we are told that no one can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Spirit. Now there is no contradiction in this method. Everything depends upon the *standpoint* from which the subject is considered. But we may *make* contradiction by refusing to *move* the standpoint, and thus attempt to confine salvation to *one* thing, when in fact the Divine Spirit has ascribed it to *many*.

Turning now to the human side, we find the Scriptures still adopt the same method as when considering the di-

vine side. Men are told to do certain things, and as they do each one of these they are said to be saved. And certainly, each one of these, considered from the human side, does save, but not all in the same sense, nor in the sense in which we are saved by divine power or agency. But these human acts save us, nevertheless, in *some* sense, or else the Bible would not say so. As an illustration, let us look for a moment at faith. Now the Scriptures clearly say that faith saves us. But in one sense faith does not save us at all, for in *that* sense Christ *alone* can save us. But is there really any such thing as Scriptural faith without Christ? There must be the object of faith before faith can be exercised, and as Christ is the object of our faith, we cannot believe Scripturally without resting our faith on Him. So, then, really there is no such thing as considering faith apart from Christ. Just so of calling on the name of the Lord. How can we call on Him in whom we have not believed, and how can we believe in Him of whom we have not heard? Nevertheless it is plainly stated that "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." But if we are saved by faith *alone,* then surely calling on the name of the Lord can have nothing to do with our salvation. But we have already seen that faith alone is really no faith at all, or, as James says, is a dead faith. The same is true of calling upon the name of the Lord. We are not saved by simply calling, but by calling *on the name of the Lord.*

The Scriptures clearly state that baptism saves us. (1 Peter iii. 21.) But in what *sense* does baptism save us? Certainly not in the *same* sense in which we are to understand that *God* saves us, or *Christ* saves us, or the *Holy Spirit* saves us, or *faith* saves us, or calling on the name of the Lord saves us; but nevertheless baptism does save us in *some* sense, for the Word of God plainly says so.

In what sense, then, does it save us? Evidently only as it in some way relates to Christ, for baptism, like faith, is nothing when taken away from its legitimate association. But baptism, like faith and calling, *is joined to Christ,* and derives all its significance from Him. Without Him it is nothing; with Him it has its proper place. It must be "towards God by the resurrection of Christ." Scriptural baptism, therefore, cannot be a mere physical or mechanical act, but it has a deeply impressive spiritual significance which at once attaches to it very great importance. The phrases "baptised into Christ," "baptised into His death," clearly indicate the significance which we are now claiming for baptism. Baptism is not efficacious of itself in our salvation, nor is faith, nor repentance, nor calling on the name of the Lord, but all of these are things which we must do in order that we may lay hold of the salvation which has been provided for us *through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

It will be seen that this method of reasoning brings all the Scriptures into harmony. There is no longer even an apparent contradiction between those passages on the one hand which assert the sovereignty of God, and those on the other which assert the free agency of man. If we will carefully consider the point of view from which the subject is contemplated, we shall have no difficulty whatever in understanding that when we are said to be saved by faith, calling on the name of the Lord, baptism, hope, or indeed any other instrumentality, considered from the human side, the *one* thing which is specially emphasised must not be regarded as *excluding any of the others mentioned,* but as only stating *one* of the things by which we are saved, because this one thing has some *special purpose* which is not provided for in any of the others, or even in all of them together. But when the one thing is added to

all the rest of the human acts, the sum must be even then regarded as simply part of a circle which can only be completed by a union with everything which belongs to the divine side in the plan of salvation.

Now the important fact to be emphasised with regard to the popular use of the term conversion is, that its wrong meaning has come down to us probably through an inheritance, as has already been intimated, from the Latin or Roman Catholic Bible. This of itself is a suspicious circumstance, and at once suggests caution in accepting the popular notion of conversion. The other important fact is that, notwithstanding the New Version corrects this mistake of the old, the popular use of the term continues to carry with it the meaning of the Old Version. This shows how difficult it is to take a word back again to its original source, and put into it the exact meaning which it had at the beginning.

XVIII

PROBLEM OF AUTHORITY

Perhaps no subject has been more abused than that of the final appeal in religious matters. It is at once admitted that the problem of authority has always been somewhat difficult to solve. However, the difficulty no doubt is chiefly owing to the fact that where personality is involved (and it is always in some way involved), then the desire to rule is almost sure to make it impossible for each individual self to accept of any conclusion which dominates that self. In religious matters, however, authority has been vested respectively in the reason, and the conscience, and the Bible; and each one of these has had its advocates among theologians and religious philosophers.

But is not the main difficulty in the fact that the reason, the conscience, and the Bible have been separated in the consideration of the question? Why should these be regarded singly, when as a matter of fact they are mutually involved? No one can reach any conclusion with respect to religion unless he reasons about religion, and as the question of morality must always be regarded as a part at least of religion, it follows that no one can dispose of any religious matter without bringing the conscience into the problem. It is furthermore true that all of our clearly defined religious ideas are drawn from the Bible, and consequently we can have nothing to reason upon, and nothing for the conscience to work upon, until the Bible is taken into partnership with both the reason and the conscience. It is, therefore, folly of the supremest kind to undertake

to locate the source of authority in religion without reckoning with the three elements already indicated. When we separate these we are guilty of precisely the same mistake which is made when we separate the different elements in the plan of salvation. We may, for the sake of convenience and clearness of definition, regard these elements as units, but they are units only because they are single elements entering into the whole; and with respect to the matter of authority all the single units when placed together in their proper relations make a trinity of units, and this trinity in unity is really the source of authority in religious matters. The tendency of men to analyse, and then refuse to synthecise, is the source of untold evils, and is generally the fountain out of which flows the streams of illicit conclusions which have done so much to confuse our theological science.

It is easy enough to say that the Bible is the final source of authority in religion, but it may be well to ask those who make this contention just what they mean by the term Bible. There are at least three Bibles in every man's house. There is, first of all, what is affectionately called "the old family Bible." This, when it is faithfully translated, never changes. It represents the will of God to man, and therefore contains God's infallible word speaking to man. But there is a second Bible, which is every man's interpretation of the old family Bible with respect to his own special obligations and duties; and then there is a third Bible, which is every man's interpretation of the first and second Bibles with regard to his neighbour; and this third Bible is often essentially different from the second, while the second is often essentially different from the first. When we interpret the Bible for ourselves we often force a meaning which is not justified by any legitimate rules of hermeneutics. It is all very well for some

men to say they take the Bible and the Bible alone as their rule of faith and practice. That is certainly a fine saying, and in so far as it is practically carried out, it is worthy of all commendation. But my own observation suggests very strongly the fact that, when these men say they take the Bible and the Bible alone as their rule of faith and practice, they are simply affirming that they actually take their interpretations of the Bible rather than the Bible itself; and, as has already been intimated, these interpretations differ so as to suit each man's own case and the case of his neighbour. Evidently we do not always interpret the Bible to mean for ourselves just what we are willing to contend for with respect to our neighbours.

But all this shows that reason and conscience are both involved in the question of a standard of authority; consequently it is unmistakably true that most of us, if not all of us, follow our respective interpretations of the Bible rather than the Bible itself, as the expressed, unalterable will of God.

It will now be seen, I think, that it is equally absurd to assume that either reason or conscience is our standard of appeal. Reason must have something about which to reason. The Bible furnishes this. Conscience must have something about which it may be exercised. The Bible furnishes this. If it should be affirmed that the difference between right and wrong is an eternal difference and is not dependent upon the Bible, then it still follows that the Bible is essential to emphasise this difference and to bring it to bear upon the conscience. Paul tells us that though sin was in the world before the law he would not have known sin without the law. Precisely so is it with respect to the matter under consideration. The difference between right and wrong may belong to the constitution of the universe, and may not therefore depend upon the Bible

or any other revelation that has been made; but the Bible reveals this distinction, makes it emphatic, urges its importance, and fixes it upon the conscience, so that the Bible coöperating with reason and the conscience makes a tribunal for our guidance rather than either one of these as separated from the others.

The preacher will have great need for this standard of authority in dealing with the questions which will meet him at nearly every step of his ministry; and I am not without hope that the suggestions which I have made will help him very much in solving many perplexing problems. If he can make his people understand that reason and conscience and the Bible are not in conflict with one another, but, on the contrary, are in hearty coöperation, then very much of the mist which usually obscures the whole question of authority in religion will be practically cleared away.

Evidently we have inherited a wrong view point with respect to this matter. Part of our difficulty will be found in the influence of Grecian philosophy. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and others regarded reason as the sole authority with respect to moral conduct. In modern times the Cartesians have emphasised the same source of authority. But, perhaps, no one has given this contention such a prominent place as Immanuel Kant, the great German metaphysician, whose writings have had an almost unparalleled influence upon educated men for the last hundred years.

But this isolation of reason is neither philosophical nor reasonable. As well might we say that the spirit of the man is the source of all his activities. Man is composed of body, soul, and spirit, and whatever may be affirmed of either one of these, when separately considered, we must undoubtedly regard all three of them in any question re-

lating to the whole man. Precisely so is it as regards the question of authority in religion. We must regard reason, conscience, and the Bible as coöperating together before we can possibly reach such conclusions as will guide us infallibly in the right way.

It will help us at this point to remember that we are dealing with a subject which has two sides to it, viz., the divine side, and the human side. God has not made an arbitrary revelation in which He has announced his laws, which laws are wholly unreasonable and revolting to the conscience; but He has given us a revelation in harmony with both the reason and the conscience, and the more these are enlightened by the influence of good, right, and truth, the more strikingly does this harmony between the divine and human come clearly into view. Hence the authority of the Scriptures is not imparted to them by a divine certification, which is supposed to reside in them because of the inspiration they have received, but the authority of the Scriptures consists in the truth which these Scriptures contain, which truth is perceived by the reason and approved by the conscience. Hence it will be seen that real authority is not external, but internal; not some cabalistic seal placed upon the book, but some marvellous and easily perceived truth contained in the book, which makes it impossible for the educated reason and conscience to reject without stultifying themselves and thereby placing the whole man under self-condemnation.

In this view of the case, both the divine and human are consulted. God, in an important sense, is the author of the Bible, as He is also the creator of the man. The Bible is God's medium through which He communicates with the man, while the man, being the workmanship of God, is capable of responding to the revelation which God has made. In this view of the matter it is not difficult

to reconcile all the seeming points of antagonism, and to finally reach a conclusion which is alike honourable to both God and man.

From this standpoint it is proper to say that reason is *a* source of authority; that conscience is *a* source of authority; that the Bible is *a* source of authority; and that all three of these, when taken together, constitute *the* source of authority with respect to the moral or religious life.

With this simple but apparently satisfactory point of view, from which to consider the subject of authority, the preacher will be able to meet all the difficulties, with respect to this question, of those who are not hopelessly beyond the possibility of instruction. Of course it is not intended, by the suggestions I have made, to treat the whole subject exhaustively, but it is believed that the point of view selected and emphasised is the only one that will bring order out of confusion with respect to a matter which has had much to do with retarding the progress of Christianity.

XIV

THE PROBLEM OF LIBERTY

TACITUS in his Annals says: *Rara temporum felicitate ubi sentire quae velis, et quae sentias dicere licet,* which may be translated as follows: "Such being the happiness of the times, that you may think as you wish, and speak as you think."

This describes a state of things which most people ardently covet. Liberty is certainly a God-given thing, and religious liberty especially, the noblest of all gifts to any people. But liberty has often been greatly abused. Madame Rowland's cry at the guillotine has been often illustrated in human history: "Liberty, O liberty! how many crimes have been committed in thy name!" No one is so free as the child of God, for if the truth make you free, then are you free indeed. But in what does freedom consist? Is it not found after all in obedience to law? The Apostle in his letter to the Romans says, "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Many other passages might be quoted, affirming practically the same thing, viz., that law is always a condition precedent to liberty, and without law man would be a mere machine, which could act only as he is acted upon. Government implies a rule of action, and this rule must have objectivity as well as subjectivity. As has already been shown, the objective revelation of God must coöperate with the subjective reason and conscience. Despotism is law without conscience; anarchy is conscience without law. Liberty is the harmony of law and conscience, and is, therefore, the normal condition of men,

bounded on one side by the revelation which God has made to us, and on the other side by the reason and conscience which are in us.

The preacher, in meeting all the conditions of his work, will have much need for clear conceptions with respect to this question of liberty. He will find that men very generally will desire that state of happiness described by Tacitus, where they may think as they wish and speak as they think. With certain limitations this is unquestionably a most desirable state of things to contemplate. I have always admired that remarkable poem entitled "Fable for Critics," by James Russell Lowell; and perhaps the most striking thing in that poem is the following with respect to Liberty:

> "And I honour the man who is willing to sink
> Half his present repute for the freedom to think,
> And, when he has thought, be his cause strong or weak,
> Will risk t'other half for the freedom to speak,
> Caring naught for what vengeance the mob has in store,
> Let that mob be the upper ten thousand or lower."

This puts into verse practically what Tacitus said in prose. But both of these statements need to be carefully guarded; for while freedom of thought, freedom of speech, and the right of individual interpretation are fundamental in both civil and religious matters in all worthy governments, it is, nevertheless, true that freedom without law may become license, and, therefore, disastrous to the best interests of mankind instead of a blessing which true liberty always assures.

After all, it is not a very easy thing to define the limits of either religious or political liberty. It is not difficult to formulate a statement which might be generally accepted; but when we come to apply any conception of

liberty to the practical affairs of life, we find ourselves at once confronted with many opposing obstacles. And this fact illustrates the difference between theory and practice; between a statement of a truth and the application of that truth to the common affairs of life.

The first difficulty which confronts us is the difference between the liberty which we claim for ourselves and what we are willing to grant to others. We are all anxious to have the liberty to think, speak, and act for ourselves within legitimate bounds, without any obtrusive interference from any person or persons whomsoever; but are we at the same time willing to grant the liberty which we claim for ourselves to all other persons? The first end of this statement will no doubt be heartily agreed to by all classes, but we seriously doubt whether the last part of it will be practically accepted by very many. It is so easy to believe that our own way of thinking is best, that even from a benevolent point of view we are sometimes anxious to have others accept our notions of truth, *nolens volens*. Indeed, our anxiety to press our own conclusions upon others is so intense that it not infrequently happens that persecutions fall upon those who are not willing to think, speak, and act as we do; and when these persecutions take the form of the faggot or sword, we cry out against them as unworthy of an enlightened civilisation, to say nothing of a Christian civilisation. But the principle is precisely the same, whatever may be the form of the persecution. There are many petty persecutions which are just as wrong in principle as those which characterised the period of the Dark Ages. Even at this time the principle of religious liberty is perhaps violated just as often—and that too by Protestants themselves—as was done in the thirteenth century by Roman Catholics. The form of the violation is different, and that is all.

What then do we mean by religious liberty, or our Christian liberty? If this is fundamental in any worthy religious movement, it is surely most important that we should have clear conceptions of what is meant by it. It is not possible, perhaps, in a brief lecture like the present one, to examine this subject exhaustively, but it is possible to make some suggestions that will help to throw light upon this vital question.

First of all, let it be distinctly understood that all liberty necessarily has its limitations. Liberty without limitation becomes license, and license may soon become destructive of all liberty. For general purposes liberty may be defined as the *privilege to do right.* But even this contains at least two somewhat ambiguous terms. What is privilege? and, again, what is right? There are no questions more difficult to determine than those of casuistry. What is right? is no more easily answered than Pilate's question, "What is truth?" The reason of this is not far to seek. Right and wrong must always be determined by certain conditions of environment and perspective, and consequently what may be right in a given case may be wrong in another, and what may be wrong in one set of circumstances may be right in another. The determining factor is nearly always a variable quantity, and this is precisely why we cannot formulate a definite rule to meet all cases. However, the rule we have given is sufficient for practical purposes; hence we shall assume that liberty is the privilege to do right, and what privilege and right are must be left for determination in each case as it arises.

We are all familiar with the Apostle Paul's illustrations with regard to individual liberty. He claims for himself the privilege to do right, and yet he would not even exercise that privilege where he finds it would cause his brother to

stumble or grow weak. It would appear from this fact that the Apostle was quite willing to limit even the liberty which he possessed and which it was his right to exercise, when it became an offence or a hindrance to others. This is evidently a very important point of view from which to look at the question under consideration. Liberty not only necessarily has its limitations, but it may and ought to have voluntary limitations. While we may have the privilege to do right, it may not always be wise to exercise that privilege. It often happens that by voluntarily refusing to exercise a privilege, which we possess, we show the highest wisdom. No doubt we shall be told at this point that we must have honest convictions and also the courage of them. Undoubtedly we ought to have the courage of our convictions. But true courage does not consist in rashly using even a privilege. We have known members of churches to divide their church into factions simply because these members were determined to show that they had the courage of their convictions, while a little more wisdom and a decent suppression of a temper, which they were pleased to call courage, would have avoided the whole difficulty. What we call courage is often little better than folly or madness, while what is called conscientiousness is very frequently nothing better than stubbornness, or "cussedness."

Let us look at some practical examples in the use of liberty. Suppose a preacher is called to serve a church as its pastor. Such a call implies that there is a mutual confidence between the person called and the church. Now how may this confidence be maintained? If the preacher wishes to preach what is contrary to the views of the church, there is always a danger of conflict. How can such a conflict be avoided and at the same time the liberty of all parties concerned be maintained? If the difference is

about matters wherein the preacher is right and the church wrong, and he can convince the church that such is the case, the probability is that no serious conflict will ensue at all. But in case the difference is regarded as vital, and the church cannot be be convinced, then one of two things must follow, namely: the preacher must either cease to preach what is offensive to the church or else he should resign at once and seek some other position. Surely the church cannot ask him to preach contrary to his convictions, consequently if he preaches at all for that church, and preaches with respect to the matters in dispute, he ought to speak just as he feels; but he cannot do this, in the case we have suggested, without giving offence, and this being true, the only course left open for him is to resign his position, and this every honourable man will do when he understands his true relation to the church.

Nor must the church be regarded as seeking to abridge his liberty. The church has its rights as well as the preacher, and it cannot therefore tamely submit to teaching which it regards as essentially wrong. Surely it cannot be expected to pay for such teaching. The church may, and probably will, regard the preacher as perfectly conscientious, and it will no doubt allow that he ought not to preach contrary to the views he entertains; but at the same time, the church has a perfect right to insist that such preaching shall be done elsewhere, if done at all. The church may surely refuse to pay for a kind of preaching of which it does not approve, and do so without the slightest infringement upon the liberty of the preacher who has been employed by it. If the preacher wishes to ventilate his views, he may hire a hall and do so, or secure a call to a church that will hear him with patience; but he certainly has no right to regard himself as persecuted, or to

imagine that his liberty is in any way abridged by the refusal of the church in question to pay him for preaching a kind of doctrine not acceptable.

The same is true of college professors. If a college has been endowed and is sustained by a particular religious body, the professors in that institution ought to teach what the religious body they represent holds as truth, so far as this can be ascertained. Doubtless there must be mutual forbearance where there are slight differences with regard to matters which are not vital, and generally forbearance is a much better remedy for even what is a crying evil than an opposition which has the slightest appearance of persecution. Indeed, the very best way to give an error public notoriety and influence is to advertise it by bitterly opposing it in an unseemly way. Hence, often the best way to kill error is to let it alone. It will usually die from its own poison if it is left to take care of itself. But if too much attention is given to it, the men who propagate it are likely to become martyrs in the public estimation, and they thus gain position and influence quite unequal to their abilities. Nevertheless if a serious conflict arises there are only three ways out of the difficulty. First, the professor may convince the religious people whom he serves that he is in the right, and they may adopt his views. This, however, is not usually the case. The very fact that the conflict has arisen precludes the possibility of calmly considering the matters in dispute, and even though the professor may be in the right, he will probably find it impossible to convince his brethren that such is the case. What then must he do? There are only two other courses open. He may cease to teach the matters in dispute. This he may often do without any interference with his honest convictions. He may always do so where the matters in dispute are of no particular importance. If,

however, he regards his contention as vital, he cannot cease teaching what he believes simply because brethren who sustain the college demand that he shall cease to propagate his views. An honest man cannot be silent when he feels that he has an imperative call to speak, nor can any body of men who are properly instructed demand silence from him. If he teaches at all he must teach what he honestly believes.

The brethren whom he serves may rightfully, in the full recognition of his personal liberty, demand of him that he shall teach his views somewhere else, and not where he is employed by them. The only other alternative then open to him is to resign, and this he ought to do speedily, unless some satisfactory basis of coöperation can be agreed upon.

In such a case as I have presented there need be no ground whatever for infringement of individual liberty, and there ought to be no complaint on the part of the professor if he is required to give up his position. He can exercise all the liberty he wishes if he will provide for it himself; but he has no right to use a position which is provided for him by others to antagonise those who pay him for his services.

It seems to me that just here is the solution of the whole question. It is really a practical question and must be dealt with in a practical manner. It is no use for any one to say that the professor in question is contending for a principle. There is no principle involved; certainly no principle of religious liberty. He has all the liberty he can desire as long as he does not infringe upon the liberty of others; but when he begins to use his liberty as an offence, and those who sustain him cry out against his course, if he wishes to exercise his liberty he must seek some other place for it, and consequently the only honourable course left to him is to resign. Any failure to do

this would be an abuse of liberty as well as of the confidence which his brethren have reposed in him.

In such a case as I have instanced it will serve no good purpose to protract the controversy or persist in maintaining a position which is no longer tenable. It will not do to say that the professor must hold his place and fight for the right to teach what he honestly believes. No one questions his right to teach what he believes. His brethren would find no fault in his doing it on his own responsibility, but they decline to be responsible for him or to provide him with a platform where he can teach what they believe to be error. What he contends for is perfectly right so long as his own liberty is all that is involved; but the moment he wishes to use his liberty in an offensive way, with respect to those who sustain him, he at once transcends the bounds of honourable privilege, and he cannot claim justification by persisting in a course which can now be regarded only as a menace to those who secured for him the position he holds. To use a very simple illustration, the meal which he puts into the cake is good enough, but the manner of baking it spoils the cake. The principle of religious liberty must be maintained at all hazards, but by a wrong application this principle may be self-destructive.

Nor will it suffice to bring forward examples where others have maintained their positions notwithstanding they have taught what was contrary to the general practice of the churches with whom they were associated. This is no argument at all. Some professors have taught that the organ is vicious in religious service, and occasionally a few of their students have produced trouble in congregations where these views have found place. Because the professors have not been disturbed is no reason for regarding others who teach what is contrary to the general practice

of the churches as justifiable in what they are doing. Much depends upon the nature of what is taught, as to whether any protest should be made or not. There was, and is still, some excuse for those who oppose organs. The general practice of the churches was, for many years, to do without an organ, and consequently those who advocated organs were bound to show a reason for their introduction. The *onus probandi* was on their side, and the case can only be regarded as parallel when we suppose that those who advocated organs, whether in colleges or churches, persisted in doing so notwithstanding the protest of a large majority of the churches. Even in such a case, any one would have the right to advocate his own honest convictions, though he stood absolutely alone in doing so, but he certainly would not have the right to advocate these convictions in opposition to those who supported him. If any one wishes to maintain what he thinks is right, and yet finds himself in a feeble minority, the only course left open to him is to find a support or a platform at some place where his liberty to speak what he thinks will not be questioned. But we feel perfectly sure that no man has a right to receive money from any church, college, or association and at the same time place himself directly in antagonism to the parties who sustain him. This is the real question, and it must not be obscured by extraneous matters.

The same is true as regards writing for our religious papers. There are many persons who imagine that an editor is despotic, overbearing, and often very unfair because he will not allow certain scribes to write in the columns of his paper. These writers do not take into consideration the fact that the editor has a right to control his paper in what he believes to be for the interest of his readers and himself, as well as the cause his paper repre-

sents. If such writers feel that they are aggrieved they may start a paper on their own account, or seek some other existing paper as a medium through which they may make known the views which they wish to present to the brethren. But they certainly cannot justly complain because the editor refuses to have them state their case in his columns, if he conscientiously believes their articles would not be useful to his readers. Some one must take the responsibility in all such cases, and surely no one can do this but the editor himself.

I say this much because many persons are quite unreasonable with respect to what they call the liberty of the press. The liberty of the press has its limitations as well as everything else, and if there were even more restrictions placed upon the correspondence than is now done, it would perhaps be better for all concerned. At any rate it is certain that editors are among the most tolerant of all persons who deal with the public.

No one ought to suppose an editor is infallible. He may make mistakes, and often does make mistakes. He may be tolerant where there is no reason for it, and may be intolerant where there is even less reason for it. But there is one thing which must be admitted, whatever his course may be, namely, he alone can be responsible for the conduct of his paper.

We come now to a most important fact connected with the whole question of Christian liberty. If there was only one party to the question, then there would be little difficulty in managing all matters in which liberty is involved; but there are always more parties than one involved, and this at once makes the problem complex where it would otherwise be simple. As regards the case of the college and the professor which has been referred to, it may be that the churches should be regarded as all wrong and the

professor right. But that is not the real matter at issue. The churches believe that they are right and that the professor is wrong, and while they believe so the professor must yield to their wishes or else he becomes a factionist and not a liberty-loving Christian. If he was the latter, and at the same time understood the true meaning of liberty, he would not contend that he has a right to maintain his religious views from a public platform which is maintained by the contributions of the churches which he is antagonising. It will not do for him to say that his views are Scriptural, and therefore he must maintain them. The Scriptural character of his views is not involved in the point under consideration. If they are Scriptural, the churches would no doubt do well to give heed to what he says, but while they do not believe his views are Scriptural, he has no right to use their platform to lecture them into obedience to his wishes.

Of course this view of the matter at once raises the right of majorities to rule, and at the same time clearly intimates that minorities must retire from every place where they are outvoted, unless they are willing to submit to the will of the majority. However, this view does not imply that majorities are always right. Indeed, it often happens that the minority is right and the majority wrong; but no matter how this may be, the best we can do in our present environment is to settle things that ought to be settled by a vote which recognises the right of the majority to rule. If the minority cannot afford to suppress honest convictions, then the best that can be done is to seek another place where these convictions can be fully maintained.

Let us suppose a case. A church might be divided on a point of doctrine. Now if the question involved is vital to either side, it cannot be allowed to rest. In such a case

some one must yield, and the law of love requires that those in the minority must yield, whether right or wrong. If wrong they ought to yield, and if possible work on the side of right. But if the minority is right or continues to think itself right, the only thing it can do is to accept the decision of the church and then seek some other place where freedom to maintain the particular point in question can be allowed. It does not follow that the majority is tyrannical because it will not allow further discussion on the question after it has once been decided. It is no use to try to settle anything, if, when a vote is once taken, the question may be still open for discussion.

No doubt we will be told that questions of doctrine cannot be settled by majorities. That is perhaps the case, so far as the truth of the doctrine is concerned. But we are not now discussing whether a doctrine is true or false. We are simply seeking a solution of a difficulty which has been precipitated by a difference of opinion with respect to doctrine. If it is the rule of the church to decide such a question by a majority, then the minority must submit, or else seek another place for work. If, however, such a rule has not been adopted by the church, it surely may be adopted at any time a majority votes in favour of it. I do not say that such a vote will make either the rule or the doctrine right, but I do say that where the rule is once accepted by the church the only thing any one can do is to abide by it or else leave the church. And if this view of the matter could be generally accepted, all the ugly quarrels and bitter feelings which have frequently characterised church differences might be effectually avoided. Every man's liberty could be maintained, though by doing so some might have to suffer. Liberty has often been purchased at very heavy cost, and when it costs a great deal it may be correspondingly appreciated. Surely

it is not liberty nor anything like it to perpetuate a quarrel after all differences have been subjected to a fair arbitrament.

I have so far not said much about individual liberty. I have been considering the question mainly as it relates to assemblies or corporations, though I have discussed briefly the relation of the individual to such bodies. However, the same principle which should govern in the cases which I have enumerated should govern also in the relation of man to man, except that in the latter case there can be no deciding on questions by majorities. There is, however, a law of love, which is only another name for the law of liberty, to which each person may appeal. Sometimes it is more difficult to settle the difference between two individuals than between an individual and some body, or between different bodies; and this is why it is often necessary to refer individual cases of difference to an impartial tribunal for adjudication. This is precisely the ground for trial by jury, and such a trial is fundamental in all free countries. Arbitration should also be the means of settling difficulties between brethren, and in most cases we are persuaded this method will be a success, if the arbitrators are wisely selected and the parties concerned are animated by a right spirit.

Even as regards the difficulties of corporations, or individuals and corporations, arbitration should occupy a prominent place. Surely it ought always to be resorted to before extreme measures should be allowed. In the case of the college and the professor, to which reference has been made, there might be much gained by a conference of wise men, and we think it quite possible that all difficulties could be settled by a judicious arbitration. Often the most disturbing influences arise from misrepresentation. We believe that it is possible for brethren in Christ to

understand one another, and we believe furthermore that when they do understand one another there is generally a way to settle all differences of judgment without resorting to extreme measures. Anyhow, arbitration should be thoroughly tested before separation can be made possible.

There are, however, evils greater than the evil of separation. Almost any evil is less than the loss of liberty. Hence liberty must be protected at whatever cost; and consequently when all other means fail even separation is better than prostitution of either conscience or the right of the majority to rule.

The consideration of this subject cannot be complete without something is said with respect to the trivial matters which often severely test the conditions of association in work. Molehills are magnified into mountains; matters of opinion are transferred to matters of faith; dogmatism is substituted for reason; things that are wholly indifferent are made to occupy the most prominent place, while the spirit of domination drives out the spirit of humility and love. Division comes, but there was no need of it, and there was certainly no good reason for it.

The law of liberty is a much higher law than that expressed in what is called "The Golden Rule." The latter makes self the standard and requires no higher conduct towards others than we would have them exercise towards us, if our relations were reversed. That is, we must do unto others as we would have them do unto us, if we were placed where they are, and they where we are. This is unquestionably a selfish rule, but it is a good rule for what is called civil relations. As citizens of the state we do well if we observe it, but as citizens of the kingdom of Christ it does not meet our whole case. We need to bring in the law of love, which is the law of Christ; this compels us to deal with one another as Christ has dealt with us.

This law clearly implies that every possible means shall be used to conciliate rather than alienate, in all differences of judgment. In other words, selfishness must give place to love, and when love reigns there will generally not be much difficulty in settling all questions between brethren.

I cannot refrain from protesting against the magnifying of small things which I fear has become a habit with some people. There are not a few who imagine that they are martyrs to a great cause when they have practically destroyed their usefulness by fighting a stone wall with what they call their honest convictions. Theirs is the courage of the bull on the railway track. He may injure the locomotive and throw the cars off the line, but at the same time he is likely to get pretty severely hurt himself. There is a good deal of useless talk about the courage of convictions. True courage is cautious, sensible, kind, and even, in the right place, gentle. It is never obtrusive, loud, demonstrative, or officious. It certainly does not show itself in the Sancho Panza style of fighting windmills. And yet it may be safely affirmed that most of our controversies are about questions which have no great practical importance in their relation to human life. The New Testament does not abound in discussions about trivial distinctions. Sometimes faith is put before repentance, and sometimes repentance is put before faith. Sometimes one is used alone, and sometimes the other is used alone, but in all cases both are clearly implied in the return of the sinner to God. No such nice distinctions are made with respect to the baptism in Spirit, the gift of the Spirit, and the indwelling of Spirit, as some are accustomed to make. All these are spoken of in the Scriptures, and each one has its proper significance, but the Apostles were quite too much in earnest about saving souls to stop by the way to occupy theological platforms where the nice distinc-

tions of modern theologians are supposed to be discussed.

There is really no definite name given to the followers of Christ. They are called "Saints," "Christians," "Disciples of Christ," "Brethren," "Children of God," etc., etc. All these names are necessary in order to express all the relations which believers sustain to one another, to Christ, and to God. Paul came nearer being a theologian than any of the Apostles, but he never began a theological argument without running over himself before he went very far. The love of souls in him was so great that he could not tarry in a theological discussion. He immediately pressed to the practical conclusion; so that all of his discussions end like his theological discussion in his great letter to the Romans. After demonstrating the superiority of Christianity over other religions and after telling us something of the nature of the government of God, he rushes on to the practical and begins the twelfth chapter with this remarkable passage: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."

I am stating now no new doctrine in urging this view of the matter. If I understand the religious position of Protestants they have always antagonised the notion that theories, speculations, philosophies, or anything depending upon mere logical deductions should be allowed to take the place of divine living. Life with them has been the great thing aimed at. Principles are no doubt right enough in their place; but after all, even these are worth nothing unless they are incarnated. Right living is the only thing that is worth the wear and tear of the present little while. If, however, true character can come out of our sacrifices, toils, troubles, and even tears, then life

is not only worth living but is worth everything else in the universe.

This brings me to say a few things that may be regarded as a fitting close to this subject. Let no one imagine that in our present environment a true life can be evolved without some conflict. I am never troubled by antagonisms, provided I understand what they are and at the same time have grace to deal with them. Paul prayed for the thorn in his flesh to be removed, but this was not granted him. The thorn was no doubt necessary in order to his highest development, but he had given him the grace needful to bear it, and this was far better than to remove the thorn. We cannot hope to take part in the mighty achievements all about us without occasionally coming in contact with something that is unpleasant. But there is nothing strange in all this. There are analogies all around us which suggest even more than we usually see of what is unpleasant. The noblest manhood and womanhood reach their highest development in conflict, just as the noblest men and women physically are developed in that belt of earth where the seasons are continually at war with one another. In a world of ease there can be no growth. The storm is as necessary as the calm, and clouds are equally important with the sunshine. Darkness has its place as well as light, and death is a part of the process of life's development. A grain of wheat is not quickened except it die. Hence, while eternal vigilance is said to be the price of liberty, no liberty is worth much which is produced where eternal vigilance is not required. Hence it will be seen that the occasional conflicts which are precipitated by contrary currents of thought and action may result in good instead of evil, if only we are properly exercised by them. In any case I have no faith in the doctrine of suppression. Let every truth be fairly considered,

and though antagonising some other cherished truth I have held, I am willing to give both a fair chance for supremacy, and finally make my choice between them. If I must surrender, I will. This I believe to be the only safe course for the conservation of liberty or even self-respect.

There is still another matter which needs to be guarded against. In our limitations of liberty we must be careful not to stifle it to death. Law should not be used to destroy progress, but to encourage it. Legitimate limitations are always helpful to normal development, while unbridled license is sure to react in the interests of despotism. Consequently it is a dangerous thing to attempt to block the pathway of progress, and any unreasonable limitations of liberty of thought, speech, or conduct must necessarily, in the end, be disastrous to Christian development. It is, therefore, most desirable to maintain the fullest liberty to investigate every important question, even though the investigation should overthrow some of our most cherished convictions. No lover of freedom can be satisfied with anything else, and no Christian ought to fear the results of any honest search after truth. An open mind is just as necessary as an open Bible. We must have both of these, and even more than both, for we must have the earnest thirst after truth which will compel an open mind to keep constantly in contact with the open Bible. Uniformity that is bought at a price, involving the suppression of free discussion, may have a name to live by, but it is certainly dead, and is, therefore, worse than worthless. Hence, we conclude that, while true liberty is always bounded by legitimate limitations, some of which have already been mentioned, it is also true that nothing is more fatal to liberty than limitations which are neither just nor conducive to the best interests of mankind.

In every case it must not be forgotten that Christians differ widely in temperament, environment, development, etc. This fact makes it impossible to suppose that any hard and fast rule of thought or action can be formulated that will suit every one. Different temperaments must be treated in a different manner, and it is just as rational to prescribe the same remedy in every case of disease as to prescribe an iron bedstead rule for faith or conduct. There are some Christians who must be allowed to think on lines which might possibly be regarded by others as unfruitful; and yet it is precisely the want of recognising this difference in conditions which makes nearly all the trouble among Christians. A distinctly philosophical mind will more or less theorise with respect to nice distinctions, while an eminently practical mind will avoid these distinctions. Emotional Christians will often tire of the hard logic of those who work their way to Christ through the strong reasoning of the theological epistles; and yet if all get to Christ it makes very little difference about the road by which they come. When once at the centre, the outlying territory may be easily commanded, but as long as there is failure to reach the centre, everything must be more or less in confusion.

Just here is the principal sphere for the exercise of true Christian liberty. Let each man be fully persuaded in his own mind, and let him act as respects his methods as seemeth good to himself. If he can find spiritual comfort in considering philosophy or critical questions, by all means let him have liberty to do so, if his examinations are conducted in the spirit of Christ. But let him not treat his brother, who sees no good in such things, as ignorant, or as incapable of making spiritual advancement. There is often danger that we will make culture an article of our faith. Doubtless culture in its right place should

not be despised, but it must never be allowed to look with contempt upon the uncultured, provided the latter are truly following the Christ.

This brings us to the real point in the whole controversy between those who are seeking for a higher development and those who seem practically satisfied with things as they are. Surely patience is much needed in order that each of these classes shall be treated fairly and their mutual fellowship be not disturbed. And, consequently, if liberty is allowed to exercise its true function, the educated man will not despise the uneducated man, nor will the latter regard the former as obtrusive and arrogant because he seeks to help his weaker brother up to a higher point of view, and a wider influence. The right exercise of religious liberty will do much to correct a thousand evils which beset us on all sides. What we must guard against continually is any tendency which interferes with growth. A suppression of legitimate liberty is sure to dwarf every soul which this suppression touches. Nothing will be so fatal to religious progress as a compressed legitimate liberty.

Just here we meet the chief objection to human creeds. They crystallise the thought of to-day and make it a standard for all time to come. They practically declare that all truth has been discovered and all possible progress has been made. Such a view, even when not put into practice, has a paralysing influence upon the mind. However, when each person has had liberty to judge for himself what truth is, and to work out this truth in his own life as best he can, then there is not only chance for development, but there is also excellent opportunity for development of individuality, and nothing is more needed than this to make either political, social, or religious life what it ought to be. A dead-level Christendom would be as

monotonous and unfruitful as a sandy desert. We need all through our churches the hills and valleys, mountains and plains, which are everywhere found in the material world. Variety is essential in Christianity as it is in nature. The only thing that has to be guarded is that this variety shall be legitimate, and when such is the case it will always produce a harmonious development.

XX

THE PROBLEM OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM

The preacher need not trouble himself very much about the higher critics. As a rule the less he says concerning them, the better it will be for his people. The mistake which many preachers make is in supposing that the average churchgoer takes any interest, whatever, in the controversy which the higher critics have raised. Indeed, it may be said with confidence that the preacher who makes too much of critical matters in the pulpit will soon find he has made a mistake, and it is highly probable he will not be slow to change his tactics.

I do not mean by this that the questions involved in the higher criticism are unimportant. I am free to admit that they are of transcendent importance. Furthermore, I believe they ought to be discussed, but at present they are certainly not fit subjects for pulpit discussion. They belong to the region of books and magazines, and ought not therefore to be dragged into the pulpit where they are wholly out of place.

The whole controversy is still in a state of flux. Very little is yet definitely settled, unless it be that very much, which has been regarded by the higher critics as of great value, has ceased to be worthy of any serious consideration. I do not mean by this that the controversy has done no good. I think it has done much good; no doubt it has done some harm. Every advance in human progress is attended with some evil, but the good usually largely overbalances the evil. There is very little unmixed good

in the world. Our very environment is tainted with sin. We cannot move without touching some phase of evil; and this being the case, any intellectual or even moral revolution is sure to be more or less influenced by the environment in which this revolution originates and is propagated.

I have already had a word to say about the higher critics. I frankly admit that I am profoundly thankful for the higher criticism controversy. The faith of some has no doubt been shaken; in other cases faith has been completely overthrown. But in these upheavals there has been the clearing of the atmosphere such as always follows the storm. We shall understand better when the storm is over, "when the stilly hour comes on."

One thing at least needs to be strongly emphasised. The final outcome of the controversy is sure to strengthen faith in the verity and trustworthiness of the Bible. Nor is it probable that when we have settled down again to something like definite conclusions, we shall occupy precisely the same ground that was occupied prior to the higher critic controversy. We shall have learned something, as well as unlearned even much more. However, it is equally probable that when we have settled down we shall not be as far away from traditional views as some now imagine. Consequently I think that the true policy of the minister of the Gospel is to keep an open mind with respect to all the questions at issue, but at the same time it is better to keep this open mind in silence with respect to the issues at stake. I am persuaded that the common people (and in this classification I place the average minister of the Gospel) will be the final jurors in the case, when the critics have finished their work, by giving us all the facts, so that even the man in the street will be a juror in deciding just what the truth is. This is precisely the course taken in our courts of law. Experts often furnish the

main facts in the testimony, but the jury is made up almost universally of the common people.

Already it is certain that a strong reaction has set in against the conclusions of the radical higher critics. Such men as Wellhausen and Kuenen no longer hold the field. Their radical conclusions are utterly repudiated by the best scholars of the age. The time was when the higher critics claimed everything, but now the whole aspect of the controversy has changed.

In any case it is a fact that the advanced higher critics have had their day. Even in Germany, the very home of Higher Criticism, the reaction is very pronounced. Such men as König, of Bonn; Voick, of Dorpat; Kamhausen, of Kiel; Orelli, of Basel, and Strack, of Berlin, do not hesitate to criticise sharply many of the pronounced views of the radical higher critics. However, the most eminent, and perhaps the best-equipped, scholar in Germany is Hommel, of Munich. He has been doing work in Germany similar to that done by Professor Sayce in England. He has endeavoured to overthrow Wellhausenism by appealing to archæological facts. He has recently published an important article in which he attacks one of the chief positions of Wellhausenism; namely, that Jahveh was simply adopted by the Israelites from the Canaanites, and has no connection with the sidereal heavens. He shows that the earliest Semites worshipped the moon-god, Ai, and that Moses gave to that worship a new content by transforming it into the worship of Jahveh.

As a proof of the reaction intimated, one has only to read the leading journals of Germany. These journals come to all the scholarly centres of England, and while there recently I learned that the general trend of the most influential papers and magazines is towards conservative criticism.

Another important fact bearing on the question is the unmistakable opposition to the new school among the clergy. Some of the most eminent pastors are beginning to speak out boldly on the question, and their utterances are helping on the reaction.

Evidently the spade is having its influence. Recent excavations have settled a number of facts that were formerly in doubt. One of the most important of these is the fact that continuous writing was in existence at least two thousand years before the time of Moses. It will be remembered that the earlier higher critics held to the notion that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch, for the reason that continuous writing was in his time an unheard-of thing. Now Professor Petrie brings evidence from his Egyptian excavations that continuous writing existed nearly five thousand years before Christ.

I do not stop to inquire into the question of chronology involved in this statement. Probably Professor Petrie has stretched his line of antiquity too far. Certainly his dates cannot be accepted without further proof. Nevertheless, after making due allowance for exaggeration in respect to time, it is still abundantly evident that long before Moses lived there existed highly developed civilisations in different parts of the world, and that these civilisations possessed a literature of no mean character. Indeed, the spade is likely to become as much the interpreter of evolution as it is of criticism. Already it has been made evident that the notion that man has developed from barbarism to his present civilised state is not in harmony with many of the actual facts of history.

Now that the extreme higher critical views are passing away, one feels almost astonished that these views could ever have had much currency. Nevertheless, when we remember that even Homer has been cut to pieces in a more

vigorous manner than the Bible, and his characters all remanded to mythical regions, we may still believe that certain minds will continue to be fascinated by what is called the subjective method of criticism. The late Max Müller, one of the most eminent scholars of his day, was wont to regard the war with Troy as only a form of the contest waged in the East to recover the treasures of which the powers of darkness had robbed the day in the West. He furthermore regarded Helen as the dawn, and Achilles as a solar figure under whose duty and prowess, etc., are to be seen merely one set of variations of the theme which has engaged the poet's imagination during all ages.

In fact, there is no end of silly conclusions when we begin this allegorical work in real earnest. The Bible can easily be made a sort of oriental picture gallery, whose paintings may be ascribed to any author of any age.

Without attempting any discussion of the merits of the higher criticism, *per se,* it may be well to make a suggestion or two with respect to the fundamental principle of this criticism. Without going into details it is sufficient to say that this criticism is a *method* rather than anything else. It is simply a way to look at the Bible. In short, it is the eye of the man seeing the Bible in the light of all the facts which science, archæology, literary research, etc., have thrown upon its pages, with the additional thought constantly influencing the vision that the Bible must be studied just as we study any other book. Now there is much in this method which ought to commend itself to every candid inquirer after truth. Undoubtedly the Bible ought to be studied in the light of all the facts which science, archæology and literary research, etc., have thrown upon its pages, but after all is it proper to study the Bible just as we study any other book?

Let us see how this matter will work out. Is the Bible just like any other book? If it is, then certainly it ought to be studied just like any other book. But if it is not, there may be reasons why it should be regarded from a very different standpoint as compared with other books. Just here we touch the crucial point in the whole controversy, and, consequently, I ask careful attention to the facts of the case.

In my opinion the Bible is not just like any other book. Indeed, there is no other book which makes any such claims as the Bible. The one feature about the Bible that distinguishes it from all other books is precisely that feature which is not regarded by the higher critics. The Bible claims that its contents are mainly from God. It claims to record the actual words of the Divine Father and of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now if this view be correct, then undoubtedly the Bible cannot be considered in its origin, or in what it contains, as like other books, without denying the supernatural element which is everywhere present in it. But the moment the supernatural element is conceded, that very moment does much of the contention of the higher critics fall to the ground.

Let us take the most common point which has occupied attention in recent discussions, viz., the literary form of the Bible. On the hypothesis that the supernatural element in the Bible has a controlling influence, does it not at once become apparent that the literary form cannot be allowed to override that which produced the literary form? Here is the crux of the whole matter. If the Bible has had a supernatural origin at all, then its literary form must be regarded from this point of view, and not from the point of view of books which do not claim to have a supernatural origin. To sum up the whole case in a sentence, it seems to me that we must first get rid of everything supernatural

in the Bible before we can possibly apply to it the same literary criticism that we do to other books.

As a matter of fact that is exactly what the extreme higher critics aim to do. They first assume that the Bible has had an origin just like other books, and that there is nothing supernatural in or about it. They then try to account for what appears to be supernatural by either ruling it out altogether or else by subjecting it to ordinary scientific methods. Can this be legitimately done? No doubt it is perfectly proper to inquire into the facts as to the claim which the Bible makes for itself; and if this claim can be shown to be illegitimate, then it may be well to regard the Bible from the same standpoint which may be used in looking at any other book. But my contention is that we must get rid of the supernatural before this course can be pursued, and when the supernatural is thus disposed of, the real value of the Bible to Christians is practically destroyed.

Of course, there are higher critics and higher critics. Extremists there are in all schools. These must be watched, no matter what their position may be. The extreme higher critics do not hesitate to dispose of the supernatural in the Bible the moment they begin their investigations, and it is precisely this fact in their method which makes their investigations really worthless. But the moment the supernatural is admitted, that moment does all real difficulty cease as regards either the literary form of the Bible or any of its statements. It is ridiculous to say that this or that could not have been the case, if we first admit that God is the author of what we are considering. It is perfectly true that we have a right to reckon as a factor in our calculation what we know to be the usual method of divine working. But may not the usual method be exactly that which is revealed in the points which may be under

discussion? How shall we determine that this or that particular fact, brought to view in the Bible, is not in harmony with divine methods? What do we know about divine methods, except as we learn them in nature and revelation? But if we reject certain parts of revelation, how do we know that the other parts may be trusted? In short, are we capable of measuring the periphery of the circle of divine procedure? This question touches the vital point in the critical controversy.

If we may "presume God to scan," then, possibly, the whole method of the higher criticism is right. It is certainly partly right in any case. Undoubtedly there is much in the Bible which must be studied just as we study any other book; but all the same, it is still true that we cannot ignore the supernatural without reducing the Bible to a plane which practically destroys its authoritative character and leaves it a puzzling enigma, both to the purely literary critic and to the devout Christian. A better way is to try to explain both the origin and character of the Bible from the point of view of the supernatural rather than try to explain the supernatural from the point of view of the ordinary rules of literary criticism. When the supernatural is once admitted, everything about the Bible is easily accounted for; but when the supernatural is excluded, then the task of the literary critic is practically superhuman. Just here we feel confident is the pivot upon which the whole question revolves, and it is just here that we must begin all our investigations with respect to the origin, genuineness, and authenticity of the Bible.

But no matter what view the preacher may take of the higher criticism as a method, or what conclusion he may reach with respect to the results of that criticism, he must, in his public ministrations, avoid any method or any conclusion that will serve to weaken the faith of his people in

the genuineness and authenticity of the Scriptures. No preacher can make his public ministry a success if he strikes from under him the very foundation of the faith which he is seeking to establish. I know it may be said that Christ is the foundation, and therefore it matters very little about the Scriptures if Christ is accepted by the people. But will Christ be accepted by the people when their faith in the only source of information concerning Him is practically destroyed? It is easy to say that everything is all right when Christ is once reached and appropriated; but will we ever reach Him or appropriate Him if we remove the only means by which we can reach Him and appropriate Him? We must not forget that "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

In this statement I pass no criticism upon those who believe that the best way to make valid and impressive the testimony of the Scriptures is to study them in the light of all the facts which science, archæology, literary research, etc., have thrown upon their pages, but I do criticise and strongly repudiate any one who takes the radical view suggested by Dr. Cheyne, of Oxford University, who in a signed article in the *Contemporary Review*, an article intended to show the teachers of youth how to utilise the biblical criticism which he favours in the instruction of our young people, says, "We must not permit the young people, after a certain age, to suppose that we know, or that any one knows, or that the writers of Genesis profess to know, anything historically of the Israelites—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." The Doctor then distinctly appeals to "The Clergy of the National Church not to treat Genesis as a collection of immensely ancient family records, when it is nothing of the kind."

Now it may be said, and it can be said with truth, that Dr. Cheyne does not represent the more cautious writers

of the higher critical school. But it may be said also that when we reach the more cautious writers of the higher critical school there is no particular reason to find fault with them, by any one who recognises the fact that the Bible should be studied in the light of all the facts which science, archæology, literary research, etc., have thrown upon its pages. It is the radical school of higher critics, represented by Dr. Cheyne, who are precisely the men who are influencing the ministry of the present day to give up the historical trustworthiness of the only book which gives any connected account of the origin, history, and destiny of man; the only book which gives us any knowledge of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.

What the preacher must do in his public ministry is to maintain by all possible means the faith of the people in the trustworthiness of the old family Bible. When this trustworthiness has been broken down, no matter for what reason, the preacher may just as well "fold his tents and steal away" from the place of his ministry. Christian people without faith in the Word of God is an impossibility, and a Christian preacher who does anything to invalidate that faith will soon find himself playing "Hamlet" with Hamlet's part left out.

I know quite well what will be said by some in reply to all this. They will say that the best way to establish the faith of the people is to give them a Bible which may be studied like any other book, and when so studied it will shine all the brighter in everything that is essential to the salvation of men. Now this may be true with respect to some men. But is it true with respect to the majority of men? I think it is altogether possible for a man to be a radical higher critic, according to the school of Dr. Cheyne, and yet hold firmly to the religion of Christ. There are, no doubt, men of this kind,

but I do not think their number is very large. It is also possible for some men to be habitual drinkers of ardent spirits, during the whole period of a lifetime, and yet not become drunkards; but most men will agree that these are exceptional cases, and do not illustrate the general rule. Doubtless the radical higher criticism may not be specially dangerous to a few well-trained minds, who have already a firm grip on Christ and his salvation, and who are at the same time exceptionally strong in their moral manhood; but I very seriously doubt the propriety of feeding the majority of men on higher criticism diet, if we expect them to be devout believers in God and the Christian religion.

But however this may be, it is simply certain that the preacher in his pulpit ministrations must not attempt to follow Dr. Cheyne in an effort to weaken the faith of the people in the historical accuracy of the Scriptures by practically making myths of such characters as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

XXI

PROBLEM OF HERMENEUTICS

While the preacher, in his ordinary pulpit ministrations, should give the higher critics a wide berth, he should be a master in exposition. I have already intimated that expository preaching, if well done, is the only preaching that will stand the test of a continued pastorate. Topical preaching may be well enough now and then, but he who relies upon it and makes it the staple method of his pulpit discourses will soon find himself either without an audience, or, if he retains one, it will be of little service to him in sustaining his ministry, or in developing the spirituality of his church members. There is no food so helpful to spiritual growth as the unadulterated Word of God. When this dwells in the members richly the fruit is sure to be unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

This being the case, it is certainly all-important to understand the Word in order that it may be preached in its purity and simplicity. Doubtless the higher criticism, when it is held within legitimate bounds, has a distinct value for even pulpit work; but, as has already been intimated, much care must be exercised in the use of any method which tends to change the popular understanding of the Bible as a divine and authoritative book with respect to all religious matters. At the same time it is possible for one to have a profound reverence for the Bible as it now exists, and yet have very little concern about what that Bible teaches. I know some preachers who would not hesitate to issue Lilliputian bulls of excommunication

for any higher critic who would dare lay violent hands upon any traditional view of the origin, literary character, and authenticity of the Scriptures, but who, at the same time, practically ignore, or either pervert or neglect, some of the plainest passages in the Bible, simply because these passages flatly contradict the creed which these preachers have accepted. In short, there are not a few who would probably die for their faith in the Bible as a book, but who would be willing to see others die who contend earnestly for the truth that is in the Bible.

It is well to make the distinction which is here intimated. The Bible as a book is certainly well enough to begin with, but if we stop there, we may be guilty of simply a sort of book worship while, at the same time, we do not really believe what is in the book, or at least do not practise what is in it.

All this distinctly emphasises the importance of the problem of hermeneutics. How may the Bible be understood? It must not be forgotten that (as I have already shown) there are three Bibles in every house. One is the old family Bible which lies on the stand, and does not change, when we have it according to the original autographs. The second is *my* Bible, or my interpretation of the old family Bible, *as I apply it to my own conduct,* and the third is *your* Bible, or my interpretation of the old family Bible in relation to *your* conduct. I do not say that these three Bibles are necessary, but I do say they practically exist in every household where there is any Bible at all. It is easy for one to affirm that he takes the Bible, and the Bible alone, as his rule of faith and practice, but when my brother insists that he does this, I always ask him *which Bible he means,* for I know quite well that he uses at least three, and consequently his plea for the Bible and the Bible alone is of little consequence if his inter-

pretations of the Bible do not correspond to the old family Bible itself. The best that every man can do is to follow his interpretation of the Bible, for this is what the Bible means to him, and if he is honest, he must necessarily follow what he conceives the Bible to teach, whether this is the true meaning or not.

Hence, it will be seen that a correct system of interpretation is most important for the preacher. He is to be an expounder of God's Word. He is to do what Ezra did when he read the law of the Lord to the people from a pulpit of wood, after the walls of Jerusalem had been repaired under the direction of Nehemiah. It is said that Ezra and those who had been selected to read the law read it "distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused the people to understand the reading."

Now this is still the special office of the preacher. He must stand before the people and read the word of God distinctly, and give the sense, and cause his hearers to understand it. In short, the true preacher is an expositor as well as a proclaimer of the Word of God. He must not speak that Word in an unknown language; consequently he must not only understand what the Word teaches, but he must be able, by the use of the simplest form of speech, to apply, illustrate, and to make the meaning so plain that even a wayfaring man, though a simpleton, need not err therein.

Now this brings us to the important question, is it possible to find and use any method of interpretation which will lead to infallible certainty as regards the meaning of the Bible? If such a method can be found and wisely used the time may come when the three Bibles to which I have called attention will be reduced practically to one, and then it will be also possible to realise Christian union which has so long been little more than a dream—

with those who deplore the present divided state of Christendom.

There are at least three methods of interpretation in popular use, viz.:

1. The Dogmatic Method.
2. The Mystic Method.
3. The Inductive Method.

The first of these practically asserts a thing is true and then goes to work to find passages of Scripture to prove it. By this method the Bible can be made to sustain almost any doctrine or practice; for only such passages and portions of passages are used as will answer the purpose of those who use them. This method in the hands of scrap doctors and sectarians has made sad work of the Bible.

As an illustration of what I mean, I may mention that, in a conversation with a distinguished preacher of Liverpool, England, I quoted Acts ii. 38, and gave what I conceived to be its true meaning. After thinking a moment, he said to me in all earnestness, "Your interpretation seems to be reasonable. Indeed, I never saw it in that light before, and if that be the meaning, then my understanding of the passage has been always wrong. But can we not *make* it mean something else?" I answered him by saying, "Certainly we might *make* it mean anything, but is that the way to treat the Word of God? Have we any right to *make* it mean something different from what it really does mean? He accepted very cordially my reproof, and told me frankly that he would never use the passage again as he had been accustomed to use it, but would give to his people what he now saw was its true meaning.

The dogmatic method will not do. We must go to the Scriptures with an open mind, not asking them to say what we say, but asking them for the true meaning of

what they do say, and then we must be willing to accept this meaning, no matter what we would prefer in the case. In short, we must not prejudge, and then compel the Scriptures, or, to use the language of my friend, *make* the Scriptures say what we prefer them to say.

The second method is likely to lead to equally fallacious conclusions. The doctrine of the inner consciousness is an important factor in the matter of interpretation, but when it leads to practical mysticism it becomes at once a dangerous factor. The eye is unquestionably very much influenced by the subjective life. We see things from the heart, and hence the New Version tells us that the heart has eyes. This is practically a new revelation of certain important passages of Scripture. Instead of saying "the eyes of the understanding" we can now say "the eyes of the heart," and consequently when we quote the passage "The pure in heart shall see God," we at once realise that only the pure in heart *can* see Him because the eyes in all others are holden, and have not the vision which enables them to see Him who is obscured from all who have not purity of heart.

By the way, this passage does not simply mean that "The pure in heart shall see God" in the future life. Its primary signification relates to the present life, and means that "The pure in heart shall see God" now, for they see the good, and this was the original Anglo-Saxon conception of God—He was the good. The good heart makes a good eye, and the good eye finds the good, and consequently the good heart will see God even in the present life, though it may not see Him in this life in all of his beauty. Even the best eyes are yet somewhat obscured in vision by the mist of this low ground where sin abounds, but when the "mists have cleared away," we shall then see God as He is, as the Apostle John says we shall see Christ; for when

we are like Christ then our eyes will no longer be holden to all the perfections of his character.

While then the inner life must necessarily have considerable influence upon our interpretations of Scripture we must not trust it too far, for this inner life is itself a variable quantity in different individuals, and will therefore give a variety of meanings for the same passage of Scripture if we trust to its guidance exclusively. At the same time I believe it is true that only the spiritual man can understand the things of the spirit of God, for to the carnal or physical man these things of the spirit are practically hidden, and cannot be understood by him until through the Gospel he is enlightened by having his eyes opened, his heart changed, and his whole position harmonised with the will of God. Consequently the preacher will be unable to deal faithfully and intelligently with the exposition of God's Word unless he is a spiritually minded man, full of the Holy Spirit, and with an eye single to every glimpse of truth which comes to him from the grand old book which it is his office to read and expound to the people.

Nevertheless it is undoubtedly true that what is called the mystic method of interpretation has been productive of much evil. But we must distinguish between things that essentially differ. The preparation of the heart for the study of God's Word is one thing and the refusal to be guided by anything except certain subjective states of the mind is quite another thing. The wise exegete will use all legitimate means to help his audience to understand the Word of God.

This brings us to the Inductive method, which is really the Scientific method; and when not pressed too far, and when used in connection with all legitimate helps, is undoubtedly the safest method in interpreting the Scriptures.

This method does not ask the Scriptures to say what we say, but it asks them to say simply what they really mean, and then we will say just what they say.

Of course this method assumes that we come to our investigation with a free mind, without controlling preconceived opinions. This, however, is the hard thing to do, and just here is where the method often breaks down and fails to bring us the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

During a musical festival at Leeds, England, I was walking along a certain street, when suddenly I was almost swept off my feet by the surging of a great crowd which was running towards a crossing. I stopped upon the doorsteps of a house, which stood out to the sidewalk, in order to protect myself. The owner of the house opened the door and I began to apologise for the liberty I had taken. "But," said I, "what is all this about? Why are the people so apparently crazy?" His answer was simply, "The Duke, the Duke." "What Duke?" said I. "Why, the Duke of Edinburgh. He is just crossing the street yonder, and is on his way to the Festival; this crowd is rushing to see him." By this time my American blood was decidedly stirred, and I replied by saying: "Suppose it is the Duke of Edinburgh, and suppose he is going to the Festival, is that any reason why the people should make fools of themselves and run over a man like I am?" The Englishman looked at me until he had fairly taken in my nationality, and then said, "Stranger, it is all in the way you look at it."

I was reproved. I knew he had stated the truth. To an Englishman the Duke of Edinburgh looked to be an important character; to an American he did not look bigger than the Prince Leopold did to the Chicago editor, who in announcing Leopold's arrival at Chicago, put it in a

blazing head line as follows: "Little Lepy arrived at Chicago last night." Truly, it is generally all in the way we look at it. And our interpretation of a passage of Scripture will probably be according to the way we look at it.

This illustration serves to show how standpoint affects our judgment. We are decidedly influenced by the point of view from which we consider anything. But the eye itself is frequently very seriously affected by the way it has been educated to look at things. I was once in a great picture gallery, and was viewing one of the most noted pictures in the gallery, entitled "The Expulsion of the Moors from Granada," when suddenly I noticed a young woman break away from a number of country women, who were following close after me, and this young woman came up to the picture I was contemplating. She looked at it a moment and then ran back to where her mother was and said, "Mother, hurry up! I have found something worthy to look at, a great picture of a circus"; and then the country women moved up to the picture and gazed upon it with intense satisfaction. It was "all in the way they looked at it."

I was once passing out with a great crowd from one of Rubinstein's magnificent piano recitals. Some of his notes were still lingering in my memory, when suddenly a great big rustic broke out in this fashion, "I wonder if anybody thought that was music? To me it was nonsense. If he had played 'Polly put the kettle on,' or 'The Fisher's Hornpipe' I would have enjoyed it; but his banging the piano over Wagner, Liszt, and Beethoven had no music in it for me."

If there is anything in these illustrations it is easy to see that the preacher will be largely influenced in his interpretation of the Scriptures by the education he has received, and by the environment in which he is placed, and

the special standpoint from which he looks at the particular Scripture under consideration.

Hence there is such a thing as dispensational truth, or truth which can be seen only when it is seen in the light of the dispensation to which it belongs. Now there are at least three dispensations belonging to the whole area of the Bible:

1. The Patriarchal Dispensation.
2. The Jewish Dispensation.
3. The Christian Dispensation.

In the study of any particular passage of Scripture we must first determine to which of these dispensations it properly belongs; for until this fact is settled it will probably be impossible for us to understand its true meaning or proper application. The moving of our standpoint will often change our whole view of anything we have been considering.

Once while crossing the Atlantic I witnessed an optical illusion which well illustrates the influence of standpoint. It was midsummer, and an awning had been stretched over the saloon deck. One evening, while the deck was crowded with passengers, some threatening clouds were seen on the larboard side of the ship. Through a rift in these clouds the moonlight was streaming upon the water, though the moon itself, which was about fifteen degrees above the horizon, was not visible, on account of the clouds which came between it and the ship. The moonlight came upon the waters where the cloud was broken, and did not reach the ship where the passengers were viewing the phenomenon. The effect was to create an apparent shore line, with the banks rising up toward the moonlight, until touched by the hanging clouds. The passengers were under the awning, and from this view point each one affirmed most positively that we were surely sailing along close to the shore;

and really nothing could have looked more like the shore than the appearance before us. When the discussion had reached the emphatic stage, I suggested that the matter could be easily tested by changing our position; and suiting the action to the word, I stepped out from under the awning toward the bow of the vessel, and soon discovered that the whole thing was an optical illusion. The separation between the clouds and the water was now distinctly visible, while nothing but the horizon could be seen where, while under the awning, the shore line had been clearly marked. The change of standpoint had made all the difference; and this is what always happens in our view of things. As long as we occupy the same view point different persons will see things probably precisely alike; and it may be that what they see will be a perversion of the truth, simply because the view point creates an optical illusion. The main difficulty is that some men persistently refuse to change their point of view. They keep themselves under whatever awning has been spread over them; and though the light of God may stream through the rifts of the clouds, they will earnestly contend that they are moving along a shore line which limits the ocean of God's truth, when, as a matter of fact, the shore line is simply the creation of the awning which is overshadowing them and controlling their mental vision. If they would only step out from under their creeds or preconceived notions they would soon discover that in their former position they were labouring under a mental delusion.

This fact will serve to explain many of the differences that exist among equally honest professing Christians. Some of these will continue to see a shore line where there is none, no matter how much light they may have at their disposal, utterly refusing to step out from under the awning which is over them. They will continue to contend

that black is white, and white is black. Of course this is a lamentable state of things; but it is a state of things that must be taken into the account in all our efforts to reach a true system of biblical interpretation. In any case a fact, so self-evident, ought to teach us to have charity toward one another when we cannot see exactly alike with respect to the meaning of the Scriptures. If we cannot always see alike with respect to physical things we ought not to be surprised if in spiritual things we should sometimes differ even where there is no reason for differing, except that we refuse to move out from under our awning.

There can be no doubt about the fact that the inductive method may be largely used with respect to biblical interpretation, so as to arrive at practically infallible certainty.

But however helpful the inductive method may be in the matter of biblical interpretation, certain conditions favourable to interpretation must be presupposed before any method will avail much in reaching infallible certainty. A few of these conditions it may be well to carefully note at this particular point.

1. No matter how good a method may be it must be wisely used. We must believe the Bible can be understood. No method will avail if we regard the Bible as a sealed book.

We must desire to understand the Bible. If we take delight in mystery and shut our eyes to the light, no method will be of any use. We must take at least the same pains we would in understanding any other book or subject. All the truth in the Bible does not lie immediately on the surface. You must dig for the best results as you must dig for the most precious metals in nature.

2. We should if possible become acquainted with the languages in which the Bible was written. No translations,

however honestly made, will convey to us the full meaning of the originals.

3. Every passage must be examined in the light of its immediate context and the general trend of biblical teaching. This is a most important matter.

The following suggestions will do much to assist in reaching the correct meaning of the Scriptures.

1. Honesty of aim. Seek only the truth, no matter where it may lead.

2. Cultivate the spiritual faculty; as the eye sees what the heart feels, it is most important that the spiritual faculty should dominate while considering spiritual things.

3. Make a profound study of the Bible. Do not imagine that truth comes to us any more than other good things, without asking, seeking, and knocking.

4. Become acquainted with the manners, habits, customs, etc., of the people to whom the various parts of the Bible were first written.

5. See to it that the right attitude towards the Bible is assumed. We must not be hostile to it; we must treat the Bible with courtesy. and kindness, as we would a friend.

6. In our application of the inductive method we must be careful to select our passages, not because they say what *we* say, but because they are the exact passages which legitimately belong to the subject under consideration.

7. We must make a clear distinction between matters of *fact* and matters of *philosophy*.

By observing these simple things it is believed that the preacher will be able to arrive at infallible certainty with respect to all those passages which belong specially to his pulpit ministration. Of course it is freely admitted that the Bible contains some depths which may not be measured exactly by any or all the methods of biblical interpreta-

tion. But these Scriptures need not be brought into the pulpit, and especially if they have little or nothing to do with the work of the minister of the Gospel. I have aimed simply to make such suggestions as will help the preacher with those passages which specially belong to his public ministration.

XXII

PROBLEM OF BIBLE STUDY

While the literary form of the Bible is important, and while a true method of interpretation cannot be easily overestimated, these of themselves will be of little or no value to a man who does not study the Bible. I do not mean the man who does not *read* the Bible. There are those who make a habit of reading some portion of the Bible every day. This is certainly all right as far as it goes. It may be both a delightful and instructive habit. But who does not meditate upon the law of the Lord day and night, as the Psalmist did, will probably never realise what he meant when he says that it was as "sweet as honey in the honeycomb" to him.

My own experience and observation lead me to say that there are very few earnest, honest, and persistent students of the Word of God. Probably there are not a few ministers of the Gospel who study portions of the Word with considerable diligence and thoroughness; but it is much to be feared that a majority of ministers study only those portions of Scripture which seem to be most necessary in the preparation of their sermons. As for the man in the streets, or even the regular attendant at the church services, it is probably true of him that he does not study the Word of God at all. The problem which will at once confront the preacher of the twentieth century is how to make his ministry stimulate his hearers to study the Bible. Perhaps it is well enough for some ministers to keep their hearers in ignorance of the Bible; for they certainly show

themselves to have no profound knowledge of its teaching. Nevertheless the intelligent, thoughtful, conscientious minister will know very soon that the success of his sermons will depend largely upon the knowledge which his hearers have of the Word of God.

I have already intimated that expository preaching is the best kind if this is done as it should be. Nothing can take the place of the Bible in the pulpit. It must have supremacy there. Other books may occupy even supreme prominence in other places; but the pulpit is the special home of the Word of God, and unless every utterance of the preacher is supported by that word his pulpit ministrations will in the end amount to little or nothing.

It is easy to make suggestions as to how Bible study may be stimulated, but it is quite another thing to make these suggestions practical in the preacher's public ministrations. I do not rely upon the Sunday school for the biblical education of even the young. In the proper place I will give my reasons for reaching this conclusion. At present I wish to say that I am certain the preacher must be mainly the centre of influence which will tend to biblical study. First of all he must himself be a student of the Bible. Like begets like. Whoever shows himself to be a master in properly dividing the Word of God will stimulate others in the same direction.

But something can be done through organisation. I have a poor opinion of a preacher who relies exclusively on his two sermons each Lord's Day for the feeding of his flock, and leading them into pastures high up on the spiritual mountainsides. This work must receive considerable attention during the week. The prayer meeting should not be made a sort of scapegoat for this particular service. It has a special function all its own which will be clearly seen when the prayer meeting is under consideration. The

preacher should have a weekday Bible class, or it may be two or three Bible classes during the week. He must consult the convenience of those who wish to attend, and must adapt himself as far as possible to their circumstances. But he must not let anything hinder the regularity of his weekly meetings for the study of God's Word. Perhaps he may say that such meetings cannot be made a success, that he cannot secure anything like a reasonable attendance. Now this is quite possible in the case of some preachers. But where this is the case it ought to be a sign to such preachers that they have mistaken their calling, and as a consequence they ought surely to seek some other vocation without delay. A man had better peck rock on a turnpike than to try to make a successful ministry who has no ability to make the study of the Word of God the most fascinating and attractive study within the whole range of human investigation.

Of course, if the preacher ought to be in a Bible class himself it is probable he will not be able to gather many together or hold them for any length of time in the study of God's Word. But if the preacher is himself, first of all, a profound and conscientious student of that Word, and has the ability to use that Word for the edification of others, there will be little difficulty in securing an audience of reasonable size on nearly any week evening, if the preacher has enthusiasm enough behind his purpose to carry it forward with energy.

Of course nothing can be done without faith. And yet all things are possible to those who believe. Whoever forms a Bible class as an experiment will probably soon have to witness his experiment fall to pieces. But whoever is competent and forms a Bible class on faith, will soon find that faith, in this respect also, is equal to overcoming the world.

The Bible cannot be studied properly through the ordinary pulpit discourses. Certain phases of Bible truth can be made effective in this way better than in any other way. But there are other phases, and some of these among the most important phases of biblical truth, which cannot be effectually treated except in a Bible class, organised specially for biblical study. In such a class we can use all the side lights, helps, and, what is still better, the contact of different minds, speaking with respect to the same thing; for the Bible class ought to be open to the freest discussion by any or all its members, though this freedom should be limited within reasonable bounds, and this can generally be done by the preacher, who should always conduct the class.

This work will lay a burden on the preacher which will not be easy to bear if he is inclined to idleness. But even the preacher who does not like a burden will probably enjoy this one when he once gets fairly under it. Jesus said his yoke was easy and his burden was light. A yoke can never be easy until we get squarely under it. A pair of oxen cannot pull a heavy load unless the yoke fits squarely on the neck and the oxen are fairly under it. This burden of a Bible class, for at least one night in every week, will become a pleasure after a while, if not at first, to the honest, faithful, studious preacher of the Gospel. He will find that the class will be of more service to himself than to any one else. It will help him with material for his sermons; it will enlarge his spiritual vision; it will give him strength for the conflict of life; it will increase, stimulate, and energise all the elements of his spiritual manhood. But the influence of such a class upon the people whom he serves will be of incalculable benefit, and therefore will be worth vastly more than all the personal sacrifices that have to be made by either preacher or people. Doubtless some

sacrifices will have to be made by both preacher and people, but this is exactly the road which leads to the mount of blessing. We cannot hope for any blessing until we have passed the station of self-denial. This is the first thing that Christ requires of us in order that we may be truly his disciples. Indeed, we cannot follow after Him until we have fought out the battle with self and gained a victory.

Doubtless those who attend the Bible classes will have to give up some pleasure or pastime that would probably take the place of the Bible class. But these pleasures and pastimes are usually enervating and do not contribute to the growth of the spiritual man. The first business of every Christian should be to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. I say the first "business" advisedly. From a practical point of view Christianity is eminently a business. Its objective work should be largely considered from the economic point of view. What pays best? "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" We cannot ignore the question of profit and loss when we are considering the practical details of the Christian life. In fact the economic point of view has come to be of great value in estimating the worth of Christianity to the world. The ruling passion of most men is money-getting, and while this, in itself, may become a debasing passion, nevertheless it furnishes an incentive and illustration of what may be accomplished in developing spiritual manhood and womanhood. It is readily conceded that in our churches there are very many sleepy, go-easy, do-nothing Christians who are never moved to any real activity unless there is something proposed in church life which is practically abnormal, and should therefore be regarded as unlawful rather than encouraged as a helpful means in developing the Christian character. But this ought not to be the case, and a Bible

class, properly conducted, will generally be a great help in correcting abnormal uses of energy by turning activity into legitimate and useful channels.

But, however this may be, it is absolutely certain that a church cannot possibly grow where Bible study is neglected. We had just as well hope for the physical to grow without its proper nutriment as for the spiritual to grow without the study of the Bible. Consequently the preacher must, in some way, provide for this study, if he has the slightest hope of making his ministry a decided success.

This is especially true of the twentieth century preacher. The Bible just now is attracting more attention than it ever has done in the history of the world. Much of this attention is perhaps not healthy, simply because the contents of the Bible are not really studied, while its origin, literary form, and historical accuracy receive the chief consideration. It must be admitted, however, that the greatest miracle about the Bible is its wonderful spiritual teaching. No other book is like it in this respect. Every sentence in it contains a message to the spiritual man, and in this very fact must be found the Bible's chief value. Herein is the most important reason for urging us to its earnest and prayerful study. Indeed, this earnest and prayerful study of the Bible is after all the most effective means of overcoming the scepticism of the times. While recent discussions of the " higher critics " may have cleared the way for a more intelligent study of the Bible, especially by some who have been unable to accept traditional views as to the origin and character of the Bible, at the same time it is my firm conviction that the surest way to accept and honour the Word of God is to have that Word dwell in us richly, and this cannot be effected without earnest and prayerful study of the contents of the Bible, especially with respect to the bearing of these contents upon human conduct.

XXIII

PROBLEM OF ORGANISATION

It would neither be profitable nor interesting to enter upon a discussion of church organisation from the standpoint of ecclesiastical history. The churches of the twentieth century will probably not give much attention to the old controversies which have so often split the church in twain. Indeed, it may be said with truth that the dividing line in nearly all the schisms that have taken place in the church, during its existence, have originated, or else have been consummated, on account of differences with respect to church organisation. This being a fact which cannot be successfully controverted, it is certainly a very suggestive fact, and ought to have great influence upon the Christians of the present day. It, therefore, becomes us to look at this whole subject from the point of view of a new departure at the beginning of this new century. We surely do not wish to go on repeating the follies of the past. We should, therefore, in the light of modern thinking, and modern development, seek for an irenicon which will do away with the endless jargon concerning "Historic Episcopacy," the "Credal Presbytery," and the "Congregational Conference."

As a matter of fact there are no hard and fast lines taught in the New Testament concerning church organisation. It is worth while to mention that the word *organisation* is not in the Bible at all. However, this is not conclusive against even the modern use of this term, though it ought to be suggestive of caution against its illegitimate

use. Undoubtedly the church, as a great ecclesiastical organisation, is known only in history since the apostolic days. The very names by which the primitive Christians were called are clearly indicative of great simplicity in all that relates to organisation. The phrase "Children of God," suggests a family, and this is perhaps the dominant idea of the earliest organisation. Certainly the notion of a number of churches, governed by a single bishop, is nowhere even hinted at in apostolic times. There were bishops over one church, but nowhere one over several churches. The departure from this primitive simplicity has not only produced divisions among the people of God, but has practically made Christian union impossible, because of the contentions which underlie these divisions. Christian union will never be an assured fact until Christians shall come to understand that whatever little church organisation may be suggested in the New Testament is even there without very definite outline, and is therefore susceptible of considerable variety without in the slightest degree infringing upon the church's constitution.

Organisation for work may be very important, and a certain amount of this may be even necessary; but this should always be regarded as an expedient and not as a divinely inspired thing in all its details. Much has been left to the practical common sense of Christians, as well as the conditions of their environment, as to many things involved in the question of organisation; and the preacher of the twentieth century will show his fitness for his work in nothing more decidedly than when he is capable of managing this subject of organisation for the best interests of his people. In no case must he make an extra-Scriptural view of the subject a *sine qua non* in his ministerial work. Speaking broadly, he may safely let the subject of organisation, in many respects, simply take care of itself, though he must

be careful to effect such coöperation in his church, and also his church with other churches, as may be necessary for effective and useful work. Beyond this he need not go, although he may be goaded on to do so by sticklers for apostolic practice (though the practice is nowhere recorded) and certain ecclesiastical terms which have little significance in our modern use of them. He may also sometimes find it necessary to antagonise a spirit of anarchy which would make the church a simple echo of individualism without any cohesive or coöperative features whatever. Both of these extremes must be avoided, and a preacher can usually succeed in bringing about the right state of things if he acts his part wisely and well.

Undoubtedly the church organisation found in the New Testament is not exactly in harmony with the organisation of modern times. It is probably safe to say that the New Testament churches were Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Congregational, rather than one of these to the exclusion of the others. A careful examination of relevant New Testament texts will show that the New Testament *bishop* is the same official as the New Testament *elder* or *presbyter,* and consequently there need be no quarrel between Episcopalians and Presbyterians as to the matter of church organisation; for if they are both willing to be governed by New Testament precept and example, then it is evident that they are both contending for practically the same thing. It is also true that the New Testament churches were all Congregational in their government, though their overseers were called bishops or presbyters. Undoubtedly every important matter was submitted to the whole congregation or church for final decision, though for the sake of good order these matters were probably generally considered first of all by the officers to whom the matters specifically belonged.

But the twentieth century preacher need not trouble

himself very much about the controversies which have raged along the lines of church organisation. Whatever organisation his particular church may regard as Scriptural, he himself will find the officers of great value to him if he uses them wisely and well. As a rule, nothing should be brought before the church itself until it has been thoroughly canvassed in a meeting of the official board, for if the pastor should be unable to convince this board with respect to any plan he has to propose, he may take it for granted that he ought not to try to convince the church itself since it is highly probable that his officers will usually decide such matters in the best interests of the work which is under consideration. In short, the pastor should always be able to succeed in winning to his support the officers of his church before he takes any measure to the church for its final decision.

Beyond this practical point, the subject of organisation need not concern the wise pastor, and he ought not to attempt to go any further than this; nor is it necessary that I should say more with respect to the matter, for little more can be said with profit without going into the whole question of church organisation, and this would require not only the consideration of all Scripture passages bearing on the subject, but would involve also a careful review of ecclesiastical history. This much does not come within the sphere of our present discussion, since these lectures are intended mainly to help the preacher in his *work* rather than to settle difficult questions which have long occupied the attention of ecclesiastical politicians. Usually, if a church "has a mind to work," it will find some way to do that work, and as organisation is only a method by which work is done, it certainly ought not to have the force of a principle, except so far as it is definitely provided in the New Testament scheme of the church.

XXIV

THE PROBLEM OF PROBLEMS, OR HOW TO HARMONISE CHRISTIANITY WITH THE REASONABLE DEMANDS OF THE PRESENT AGE

THE Christian religion makes no unreasonable demands. It seeks the best interests of the race, and offers to help rather than retard human progress. It holds in one hand the sword, and in the other the olive branch of peace. It aims at the overthrow of evil in all its forms, and from this point of view it uses the sword with relentless energy, but at the same time it invites to the realisation of a glorious day when we "Shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the fields shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

But this day has not come yet. It is still an ideal, and with many difficulties in the way of its final realisation; for if we accept the Word of God as a sufficient rule of faith and practice, it is abundantly evident that the present state of religious society is abnormal. No honest, well-informed person would for a moment contend that the denominationalism of to-day fairly represents the Primitive Church. Among intelligent, earnest people there is everywhere manifest a feeling of dissatisfaction with the present order of things. Many, indeed, are seeking for a remedy, and would gladly accept of any solution that gives

reasonable promise of unity among the children of God, and a speedy conversion of the world.

In proposing such a remedy, two extremes must be carefully avoided. First: In breaking away from sectarianism we must not run into latitudinarianism. This has been the fatal mistake of some very intellectual and cultivated people. Their own culture is quite too broad for the narrow shibboleths of religious partyism, and failing to distinguish between Christianity proper and the modern representations of it, they continue their rebound from the dogmatism of human creeds to what is practical infidelity. This is greatly to be regretted, not only on their own account, but also because of the efficient aid which they are capable of rendering the cause of Christ. Are they wholly responsible for the position which they at present occupy? I certainly do not wish to lessen their responsibility in the smallest degree, but I cannot help feeling that many of those who condemn them most are not entirely without blame in the matter. Let those who profess to be Christians bring their faith and practice into harmony with the Divine standard, and then they will at least be in a position to consistently find fault with those who are now driven from the communion of the various denominations by the interposition of the "traditions of the Fathers."

But the second point to be guarded is equally important. While we carefully avoid the humanisms of the denominational creeds, we must be equally careful not to make an iron bedstead of the Bible. The Lord never intended His Holy Word to be used in any such way. Especially is the New Testament far removed from such a notion. That it is an infallible guide to all who accept of Him who is the life and light of it, I do not for one moment question. But is it not possible to claim the Bible as our rule of faith and practice, and yet become as intensely sectarian as those

who formulate their faith in human symbols? My own observation leads me to conclude that some who claim to be the earnest advocates of the Bible, and the Bible alone, are the most intensely sectarian in fact, intolerant in spirit, and unfruitful in living of all who represent the present divided state of Christendom. Surely this ought not to be so, but it certainly is so. And this brings us to state more distinctly our own position.

The problem we are seeking to solve may be stated as follows: Is it possible in our Christian life to be true to the Divine Word and at the same time free enough for every worthy aspiration of every human soul? In other words, can we earnestly advocate strict fidelity to God's Holy Truth, and at the same time meet the reasonable desires of those who are to-day driven to latitudinarianism or rationalism by the human dogmas which have been erected into tests of fellowship? This is the problem of problems. And yet, in my judgment, this problem must be solved if the world is ever converted to Christ. When it is solved both sectarianism and infidelity will be shorn of their strength, and consequently the future triumphs of the Gospel will be commensurate with our most ardent expectations.

Is it possible, then, for us to be true to the Bible, and at the same time free from sectarianism? And can we meet the reasonable demands of the highest culture, and still avoid the extreme of latitudinarianism? I answer both of these questions in the affirmative, and feel sure that, if the Christianity of the New Testament is once properly apprehended, no one need have any difficulty in agreeing with me in what may at first seem an impracticable position.

Faith and obedience are the two words which comprehend the whole of Christian obligation and duty. Concern-

ing this statement there would, perhaps, be no difference of opinion among those who are at all competent to judge. Our differences begin only when we begin to define these terms. What is faith? and what is obedience? Or what is properly and Scripturally embraced within these terms?

Let us ask the question: What is necessary to be believed in order that we may have the faith of the Gospel? Surely not everything in the Bible; even not everything in the New Testament—though this latter is specially the Christian's rule of faith and practice, for it is possible for some to be saved who have never read the New Testament through, indeed, may not have read it at all. Evidently there has been much confusion in the public mind at this point, and this confusion, I think, has chiefly come from a failure to distinguish between faith and knowledge. Unquestionably it is the duty of every Christian to seek to attain all the knowledge he possibly can acquire, and still this knowledge should never be allowed to usurp the proper place of faith, for no two things are more distinctly different than faith and knowledge. Both are important, but for very different reasons. Faith is essential to spiritual life, knowledge is essential to spiritual growth. One unites to Christ, the other develops in Him; one is vital in the formation of Christian character, the other is essential to the development and enjoyment of the character already formed. But this view of the matter is often practically rejected. The things that belong to knowledge are crowded into Confessions of Faith, and these formulated human statements are made the tests of Christian fellowship, instead of that character which must always come before we even enter the sphere of knowledge. Hence, knowledge has become the standard of orthodoxy, rather than the simple faith of the Gospel. A failure to know as much as your religious neighbour is often fatal, in his estimation, to your

religious character, even though his faith should fully comprehend everything that is required in the Word of God.

What is the faith necessary to the formation of Christian character? Without referring to the proof texts—though plenty of these are ready to hand—it will be sufficient to say that the Apostles preached only one thing, viz., that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God." This proposition, though variously stated, was everywhere presented as containing, so far as faith goes, all that was essential to Christian character; and this was not only everywhere preached, but this was what was everywhere believed by those who entered upon the Christian life.

Now, if we limit our Articles of Faith to this grand proposition, are we not still true to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures? And can we add anything to this while we confine ourselves to the things that legitimately belong to faith? Our position is that we should insist upon nothing as an article of faith that is not essential to Christian character; and as (according to the Scriptures) the only faith required to this end is a hearty trust in the Personal Redeemer, we at once reject all human creeds and insist upon the divine creed as the only foundation of the Christian's faith.

Some of my objections to human symbols may be briefly stated as follows:

1. They substitute philosophical speculations for the Personal Christ, thereby usurping the sphere of faith with the things that belong to knowledge.

2. They are without any divine sanction, and consequently should not be made tests of Christian fellowship. We should certainly have a "thus saith the Lord" for everything that enters into the question of fellowship.

3. They are schismatical in their tendency. The history of the church is a sad commentary on the influence of

human dogmas upon the peace and harmony of the children of God.

4. No human creed can be perfect. Hence even if it were right to formulate the things of knowledge and make them objects of faith, such formulas must of necessity exhibit many of the traces of human weakness. Men are short-sighted at best, and it ought to be expected, therefore, that their most careful work will lack the completeness which should characterise a creed of the church of God.

5. No human creed can ever be adapted to every creature. The infinite mind can alone provide that which is suitable to such an infinite variety of circumstances and conditions as is everywhere found among men. The best that any number of men can do is to provide for those who are of like tastes, habits, etc., and in like circumstances with themselves. They cannot reasonably hope to take into consideration the whole sphere of human thought and action; consequently the most perfect human creed possible must, after all, have only a limited application.

6. Human creeds are not only limited in their reach and unsatisfactory in their character, but they are not permanent. They are either changing or else passing away entirely. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever."

7. God has given to the church a creed—a divine creed—and it is disrespectful to our Heavenly Father, presumptuous, and wicked to substitute anything for that which divine wisdom has prepared.

Such are some of the objections that may be urged against human creeds as bonds of union and communion among the followers of Christ. And I think that this indictment is quite sufficient to condemn them to everlasting banishment from all the places they now occupy.

I think I have now made it evident that, so far as faith is concerned, it is quite possible to be true to the teaching of the Scriptures and at the same time entirely free from sectarianism. In fact, I think my position is not only true to the Word of God, but would, if generally approved, completely overthrow sectarianism with all of its concomitant evils, and thus open the way for a complete restoration of Primitive Christianity in both its faith and practice.

But is this position such as will provide for the reasonable demands of the broadest culture without reaching the point of latitudinarianism? If so, then we have surely solved the religious problem of the present age.

Of course I do not hope to present what will meet the unreasonable demands of culture, any more than I could provide for the satisfaction of the spirit of sectarianism. No religious position that can be taken will suit either of these. Men who are in the church for selfish purposes, or who are out of it for the same reason, are not likely to be influenced by the consideration I am offering. I make a broad distinction between sectarianism in *form* and sectarianism in *spirit*. I think there are many who occupy a sectarian position who are nevertheless largely free from the sectarian spirit. I think it is also true that there are many highly cultured people who stand to-day practically opposed to Christianity who have failed to distinguish between the Christianity of the New Testament and the modern representations of it. They have been driven into apparent infidelity by the unreasonable human systems which have usurped the place of the religion established by Christ and his Apostles.

Let us test this matter for a moment. How many so-called infidels of the present time really reject the proposition I have presented as the Christian's creed? Doubtless there are some. But is not the number small as compared

with those who reject the various human symbols which are offered as bonds of fellowship? And would not even this number still be reduced if human symbols were all abandoned and the Divine Creed everywhere respected as it was in the Primitive Church? I feel sure that to ask these questions is to practically answer them. No one who is at all acquainted with the present state of religious controversy will question the possibility of satisfying a large portion of those who are now standing outside of the churches by making the proposition I have presented the only object of faith.

But there is still another question of prime importance which must be briefly noticed. Could such a position as I have presented be justly chargeable with latitudinarianism? I am conscious that some will think so, and hence there are those who will doubtless wish to hedge against this tendency with human definitions and explanations. But just here is the precise origin of human creeds, against which I have presented such formidable objections. It is perhaps impossible to provide against all difficulties, no matter what course we may pursue. And it may be that some would accept the Divine Creed and yet practically hold to latitudinarian views; but I fail to see how human symbols can restrain this tendency. As a matter of fact we know that this tendency is again and again developed in all the churches of Christendom, notwithstanding the barriers that have been erected against it. It might occasionally show itself among those who hold simply the Divine Creed. But I feel sure there is less danger of this when we are guided by divine authority than when our safeguards are the definitions of human creeds. Hence by accepting the Divine Creed we not only reduce the tendency of heresy within the church, but we largely reduce the number of heretics outside the church by bringing the condition of

entrance to the reasonable requirements of apostolic precept and example.*

By giving earnest attention to the foregoing considerations the problem of Christian union is evidently brought within the sphere of the practical. This of itself is a great problem, too, with which the twentieth century preacher will have to deal. He cannot safely ignore its demands. He will find it meeting him at every turn in his ministry. Even if his charge is in the country he will find the problem there, and if he is in the city it will probably be the most imperious problem with which he is called upon to wrestle. How to adjust his own ministry to the churches of the denominations around him will cause him sleepless nights, if he is concerned with the peace of Zion and the progress of Christianity in the world.

But this problem may be solved by observing the simple conditions which have already been presented; and it may be solved, too, in such a way as will not antagonise the reasonable demands of the present age. A platform that is broad enough for every follower of Christ to stand upon, and at the same time narrow enough to bring it within the dimensions of the prescribed conditions of New Testament fellowship is the only platform that promises the least possible hope for Christian union. But with such a platform we can reasonably anticipate a not far distant day when the jarrings of conflicting sects shall practically cease and when Christians shall everywhere be one as the Father and Son are one, and thus make it evident to the entire world that Christ is sent of the Father.

* See "The Plea of the Disciples of Christ," by Author, pp. 78-82.

PART III

Problems Growing Out of Ways and Means; or, How to Meet the Practical Duties of the Preacher's Position

We have already looked at the practical side of the preacher's position, while considering his personal relations to his work; but there are some distinctive features on this side which need to have very careful treatment, since they are of very great importance. Several problems will at once confront him as soon as he enters upon his work at any particular place, and unless he is able to solve these problems in a somewhat satisfactory manner, all of his prior preparation and experience will be of little avail in making his ministry a decided success. Among these problems I wish to call special attention to the following:

XXV

THE PROBLEM OF TIME

It is scarcely needful to emphasise the value of time as an element in the preacher's preparation for his work. He certainly has no license to squander time. He ought to use every moment wisely and well, for it is out of these moments that he must forge his success, if he ever has any worthy of the name.

But it is not this particular feature that is just now involved in the problem of time. I am thinking of the numerous services which are usually held during each week, and these services at once raise the question as to how much time shall be allotted each, so as not to entrench upon one another. But a matter of still more importance is that which the preacher must face when he attempts to attend all the meetings of his church, as well as the meetings outside of his church which have special reference to his work, and yet have plenty of time to study and prepare his sermons and lectures for all the public services where he must deliver these. The strain upon his time is frequently very heavy.

He must attend all the important public meetings of the church, and he must attend also weddings and funerals. As to social functions, he may or may not attend these. He must in these cases be governed somewhat by the character of the functions, and by the amount of time he has at his disposal. But he will be surprised at how much of his time is consumed by those things which seem to be imperative in their demands upon his attention, and he

will find that it will be absolutely necessary for him to economise his time in every way he possibly can in order to meet the necessary demands which are made upon it. A few suggestions just here may be helpful to both the minister and his people.

(1) His people must not be unreasonable with respect to the requirements they make of their minister. They must remember that he is human, and that therefore he cannot do everything and do it well. He ought to be allowed a very considerable margin for quiet hours when he can commune with God, nature, and his books. A failure to allow this precious opportunity will usually cost a church vastly more, in the long run, than any gain that possibly could come to it through unreasonable demands upon the preacher's time.

(2) A proper division of labour will help very much to solve the problem of time. The preacher ought not to be expected to do everything that needs to be done. It will be better for the church, as well as for the preacher, if very many things that are frequently required of him should be done by some of the church members. He certainly ought not to be required to teach a class in the Sunday School, especially if the Sunday School is held just before the morning service. Indeed, he ought not to be disturbed in his study during the whole of the morning of the Lord's Day, except where such disturbance is absolutely necessary.

He ought not, as a general rule, to conduct the prayer meeting. In most churches there are members well qualified to take this service, and they should be required to do it, so as to relieve the pastor from all care with respect to the matter. He should attend the meeting as a general rule, though he should be relieved from all responsibility in conducting the service. In most cases it will be well for

him to close the services with a few remarks which will generally be suggested by the service itself, and therefore need not require special preparation.

(3) The course I have suggested will be helpful to the church members as well as to the preacher. Nothing perhaps is more advantageous to the growth of the church than to bring every member of the church, so far as it is possible to do so, into active participation in some part of the church's work. In so far as the pastor can inspire and provide for this division of labour he will contribute in the best possible manner to the development of his church in all that relates to spiritual advancement, as well as relieve himself of certain burdens which necessarily follow upon unreasonable demands made upon the time and strength which are at his disposal. In any case he cannot be too careful in providing means by which he may bring into active exercise every member of his church, as well as help him to economise the time which is such a precious element as a factor in his great work. In short, he should never do anything himself that can be successfully done by some member or members of his church. This rule should be made imperative, and should have a prominent place especially in the services of the church where the membership of the church may be made available for mutual edification, as well as for saving the time of the preacher, which may be better used for work which he alone can do.

Recently a new difficulty has arisen with respect to the matter of time. There is a growing tendency to give a special Lord's Day for every worthy enterprise that appeals to the benovelence of the churches; and when all these enterprises are provided for there is frequently very little time left for anything else. The numerous societies and benevolent organisations are imperious in their demands for recognition at especially the Lord's Day services, and

when these are all heard, there is little opportunity left for proper attention to local church affairs, and there is often a heavy encroachment made upon the time that ought to be devoted to the particular work of the local congregation.

Now, let no one misunderstand me at this point. These calls from outside societies and organisations are generally worthy and ought to have a hearing in all the churches. In most cases the plea of these organisations is of a character that will help the churches, will stimulate their benovelence, and will do much in many ways to strengthen the home work. Nevertheless, I am profoundly convinced that there ought to be a better division of time with respect to these special pleas than that which now generally prevails. The following suggestions may be worth careful consideration.

(1) Let the Lord's Day meetings in all the churches be protected from any outside interference, no matter how important the plea may be, for nothing can compensate for loss of spiritual fervour which ought always to result from a well-conducted Lord's Day service.

(2) If these pleas must be made on the Lord's Day let a special meeting be appointed for that purpose, either in the afternoon or at night, but always keep the Lord's Day morning service free from anything that diverts it from its main purpose, viz., the edification of the church itself.

(3) In most cases a week-day meeting to hear these special pleas, in the long run, would be better than to crowd them in the Lord's Day meetings where at most very scant attention can be given to them. Of course, I do not mean that the pastor of the church may not occasionally preach sermons with special reference to these pleas, but even when he does this, he should make the sermons always contribute largely to the spiritual growth of the members, and generally a wise selection of the subject and a proper

treatment of this subject will be productive alike of helpfulness to the church, as well as to the plea which is under consideration.

However, it is impossible to provide definite conditions for all cases. Still, it is believed that the suggestions already made will help a wise pastor to deal intelligently with one of the most difficult problems which he will be called upon to solve. Whatever he does he must scrupulously guard his regular services from anything that will weaken their effect in strengthening the faith, developing the spiritual life, and stimulating the activity of the church members. Probably it will be difficult for him to make the officers, representing these outside pleas, believe that he is not selfish when he refuses to allow them to appropriate the whole earth as regards the particular matter on their hearts, but all the same he must do his duty to his own people, whether it pleases corresponding secretaries or not. The growth of his own church will often be the measure of the growth of the organisations which are clamouring for his help. If the home churches are weakened from any cause whatever, this weakness must ultimately act upon the organisations that are outside and dependent upon the help which must come from the churches.

XXVI

THE PROBLEM OF MEN

Men are still the mystery of mysteries, the problem of problems. They have been studied ever since their creation, and yet they are to-day not much better understood than they were six thousand years ago. One thing we can say truthfully about them, viz., they do not always illustrate the unexpected. We are beginning to know with almost absolute certainty just what they will do under certain given circumstances. We know that they are like musical instruments in an orchestra; they will render the sounds more or less agreeable, according as they are well or badly touched. Carlyle was not far wrong when he said, "Men are the miracle of miracles—the great inscrutable mystery of God. We cannot understand it, we know not how to speak of it, but we may feel and know, if we like, that it verily is so."

Nothing perhaps characterises men more distinctly or more emphatically than their perversity with respect to religious matters. It will scarcely escape the notice of those who come in contact with our church forces that, comparatively speaking, few men seem to be deeply and earnestly interested in religion. The most active forces as well as the most numerous forces in our churches are women. This fact does not exist because men are naturally irreligious. Their very constitution forbids this. They are religious whether they wish to be so or not. To use a common but forcible expression, they are built that way. Men may wish to hide this predominant characteristic of

their organisation, but in doing this they always illustrate the supremest folly. They may reject the Christian religion, they may even oppose it with all the vehemence they can control, but they are sure to manifest their religious nature in some other direction, just as the heathen do by worshipping idols when they do not know the true God. Men who refuse to associate themselves actively with the Christian forces are certain to worship idols of some kind, no matter how these idols may be made or what they may represent. No man can get away from religion any more than he can get away from himself. It is a part of his being, a controlling element in his constitution, and he is only a simpleton when he attempts to ignore this fact and play a part which contradicts the very noblest endowment which he possesses. Why, then, is it that men do not throng our churches? Why is it that those even who do attend are for the most part half in earnest with respect to the worship and work of the churches? Of course it will be understood that there are many noble exceptions, but the general statement cannot be denied that the majority of even churchgoers among men are by no means enthusiastic Christians.

But my present purpose is to deal with those who do not attend religious services at all. This is the problem which will at once confront every earnest preacher of the Gospel who wishes his ministry to touch, and impress, and lead to definite action all the members of his community. He will find a large per cent. of men who are practically indifferent to his religious services and seldom if ever attend these services.

How can this indifference be overcome? Is there any excuse for it in our methods of church work? Without apologising for this indifference, upon the part of any of these men who stay away from the churches, it is certainly

worth while to inquire as to the real cause of it. May it not be that there is something wrong in our church life or in our church services that helps to produce this state of things; and may it not be that a correction of our faulty church life would bring about a reaction in the case of these indifferent men in favour of a hearty acceptance of the religion of Christ? I do not say that in all cases the difficulty could be overcome. Some men must be given up to a hardness of heart and a reprobacy of mind. They are practically hopeless, and will probably never become active participants in any outward profession of religion. There are not a few who think it is a sign of intellectual independence to refuse any distinctive coöperation with Christian forces. They will tell you that religion does not consist in church relationships, that it is simply an individual matter, and that a man can be a Christian as well out of the church as in it; while others will protest against being religious at all, though this protest is a proof of practical insanity, for if it be true that the undevout astronomer is mad, it is equally true that every undevout man must be mad no matter whether he is an astronomer or not. He cannot explain his own existence or his own threefold nature of body, soul, and spirit without in some way recognising the need for a religion such as the Christian religion undoubtedly is, when it is fairly represented in the Christian life.

However, we must deal with the facts as they are. Of course it is interesting to indicate what they ought to be, but the *ought* in ethics is a very different thing from the *is*. Facts are stubborn things, and one of these stubborn facts is that a majority of men in almost every community do not attend our religious services. Now what must be done to overcome this stubborn fact which every preacher will have to deal with, no matter where his ministry may be

located? It is easy to propose remedies that will not work, and some remedies that have been proposed ought not to work, for the reason that the remedy is worse than the disease. Some cases are like that of the doctor who prescribed whisky for a consumptive patient. He afterwards said the patient got well of the consumption but he never got well of the whisky. It is possible to propose remedies for the evil I have suggested that might crowd our churches with the very men who at present seldom or never attend these churches; but it is possible at the same time to lower the standard of Christian doctrine and life so that instead of these men being benefited they may simply be sent more rapidly on the downward road which leads away from God. A large attendance at church does not necessarily indicate a high spiritual standard in that church. Just now it is the fashion to reckon spiritual life by mathematics, and consequently we add up the contributions, the additions, and the attendance at the religious services, and then draw our conclusions as to the success or failure of the ministry where these figures have been obtained. But this is a poor way to test the spiritual life of a church. All other things being equal, the contributions, the additions, and the attendance at the church services must not be despised. These are important in their right places; but they may exist to a reasonable extent and for a brief period without much spiritual life behind them; and yet without this spiritual life the church may have a name to live by but will be practically dead.

Now it may not be possible to suggest anything very definite that will help the preacher to get hold of the indifferent men of his community; for communities differ. What may be helpful in one place may not be in another, and what will reach one man will sometimes utterly fail to reach another. Nevertheless there is a common ground

which applies to all cases, and if that is wisely cultivated the sensible preacher may be left to deal with exceptional cases. How, then, may this apparent breach between church life and men be healed?

(1) Let the preacher preach the Gospel, and preach it directly to the people. Instead of preaching on current topics and to the newspapers, let him preach on Bible themes, and above everything, let him preach Christ as the Saviour of sinners and as the great rest-giver to all weary souls who labour and are heavy laden. Men, for the most part, are tired of the topics of the week, and when they go to church on Sunday they go for rest from the vexatious problems of the week, and they go for help that they may enter upon the new week with courage and confidence. Nothing will meet their case so effectively as earnest Gospel preaching; and I mean by this kind of preaching that which comprehends the whole of the divine life as it is depicted in the New Testament.

(2) Our churches should be built with a view to the necessities of men. At present they have little adaptation to these necessities. They are shut up during the week except when religious services are held, and these generally include only the Lord's Day services and the prayer meetings. At other times the church building is simply a standing monument of the very indifference we are seeking to overcome. Instead of a warm and inviting place for men to congregate, it practically becomes a sort of standing protest against any sympathetic touch of fraternity except that which comes from public religious service.

Now, this is not what it should be. In my judgment our church buildings should be kept open all the week, and rooms in these buildings should be provided where men can come and converse with each other, write letters, read books, magazines, and consult the daily papers. In short,

our church buildings should be made really homes for all who will come to them, while useful tracts should be left upon the tables for all to read who will do so, and some one or more of the church members should be appointed by the church authorities to superintend these reading-rooms, so that there will always be present those who can instruct inquiring souls in the way of salvation. Certain persons can be appointed to superintend this important work on specified days, and by a division of labour it might be possible in some churches to have every member of the church take part in this delightful and useful service.

(3) Let the church services cease to be perfunctory and become real in every respect. At present there is too much formality and not enough spirituality. Men who are indifferent to church life quickly detect stereoperfunctity. They see this ugly thing and are repelled by it. Nothing will conquer indifference so well as an earnestness that takes little account of mere forms and ceremonies. Our present religious services are run by the clock as regards time, and run by the thermometer as regards heat, with no possible danger that they will ever reach either a reasonable length or the boiling point, to say nothing of the high temperature that makes things practically red-hot. And yet the welding point, or the point where men may be certainly fastened to the churches, cannot be reached while the churches themselves are living practically at the freezing point.

I would make one of the services at least on every Lord's Day a service mainly for Bible study, and especially for meeting the difficulties in the minds of men with respect to the religion of Christ. I would allow these men to participate in the meetings as far as may be practicable. Undoubtedly the modern pulpit needs freedom. Not simply freedom of expression, or freedom to say things that may

be contrary to the stereotyped creeds of the churches; but freedom to court investigation, and opportunity for the expression of contrary opinion. Some of us pretend to go back to Christ and his Apostles for guidance with respect to all religious matters. But it may be seriously questioned whether we are always willing to do this when Christ and his Apostles would lead us contrary to our established habits and customs. There is scarcely anything so imperious as custom, and a slavish subservience to modern custom is precisely what is the matter with the pulpit to-day.

In the first place, the pulpit is protected against any questions. This is very different from the method of Christ and his Apostles. They courted reply and discussion at every meeting they held. Each meeting was for the purpose of enlightening the people, and was open for inquiry, reply, or any form of investigation that would help to inform the hearers. Everywhere the Apostles went they held themselves ready to hear all objections and to answer these on the spot. Indeed, their most signal triumphs were gained by this free platform.

No doubt this method had some apparent disadvantages. It sometimes produced considerable confusion; but even this was far better than the "ease in Zion" which now prevails in most of our churches. A little stirring up would be a great relief to those who attend our religious services from week to week which are often cut by the theological pruning knife and then dried in the furnace of sectarian enthusiasm—an enthusiasm which has its centre and circumference in the maintenance of creedal shibboleths.

Is there any salvation from this questionable use of the great privilege of preaching? I am inclined to make a suggestion or two even at the risk of being regarded as an iconoclast.

(1) Let there be an open meeting held on every Lord's Day for the proclamation of the Gospel, and for hearing objections, and answering them on the spot; or else answering any that may be left in the question box during the week. Let there be the most perfect freedom granted at these meetings for inquiry, objection, or discussion, within reasonable limits. This will at once bring to the meetings the very people who have need of them. Thousands now stay away from our Lord's Day religious services for no other reason than the failure of the pulpit to touch the actual needs of the people. The sermons may be excellent of their kind; they may do for church members and persons well-disposed to religion, and so far as these hearers are concerned accomplish a great amount of good, but if they miss entirely the unconverted masses, then it must be confessed that the power of the pulpit is limited entirely too much.

Probably the plan I have suggested would be subjected to considerable abuse. It might be that the meetings sometimes would not be as quiet as a graveyard, but they would, even at their worst, be better than a graveyard meeting. Life needs agitation, and friction is generally the best evidence that things are not dead. I have never had any fear of free discussions, but I have always greatly feared the suppression of it. Evils may come with the former, but untold evils are sure to come with the latter.

But I do not believe that the freedom I have suggested would run away with itself if properly managed by a wise presidency. Of course much would depend upon the presiding officer, who should usually be the pastor of the church. If he should announce the subject for discussion beforehand, and let it be known that it will be open with reasonable limitations to all comers, in my judgment the church would soon be surprised at the number of people

who would be attracted to its services who now never enter the church building at all.

(2) Of course I do not mean that every public meeting of the church should be a "free for all" in the style I have indicated. Church members should have a special meeting for worship, for mutual edification, and for the study of the Scriptures with respect to the development of the spiritual life. This, in most churches, should occupy the morning service, though sometimes it may be better to have it at another hour. The time, however, is a matter of mere detail, and does not affect my general contention. No one believes in the importance of a quiet, restful, devotional service more than I do, but I believe that this cannot be secured, in the best sense, unless the meetings are practically confined to the church members; and hence without any outside interference. At present our Sunday services are held without any discrimination between the world and the church. Indeed, if there is any emphasis it is on the worldly side and not on the church side. "The world expects us" to do certain things and to have certain things done in our Lord's Day services; and to meet this expectation we go on with our enumerations until the world practically takes precedence over the church in our Lord's Day worship. The sermon is often a sort of medley without any very specific message for either saint or sinner. In an attempt to meet the case of both classes it has little or no power for either. But by the plan suggested all this lack of directness could be avoided. Will our churches have the courage to give up what is simply nothing more than a stereotyped formality?

(3) Let the preaching be simple, direct, and natural. All effort at display should be avoided. The average man does not like affectation, and he will always be disgusted with cant. He will generally commend that only which is

marked by reality and sincerity. Nor should the preacher seek to avoid speaking plainly to his people. Manly men like honesty, and no other kind of men will probably be very seriously affected for good. In the parable of the sower we have four kinds of hearers, and only one of these is permanently benefited. Preaching must reach the good and honest heart before it will bring forth fruit, some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundredfold.

The preacher need not be discouraged if all his hearers are not converted, nor should he be entirely cast down if some of those who profess Christ do not continue to honour him. The consequences of preaching are not with the preacher when he has faithfully done his duty. His responsibility is met when he has earnestly proclaimed the Gospel, and this much he must do in order to clear himself of the blood of all men; and when he does this he will find that his preaching is much more attractive to the people generally than when he skips the hard places and seeks to compromise with evil, simply because he does not wish to offend his hearers.

It is said that on one occasion when the celebrated Peter Cartwright was preaching, General Jackson entered the house and took a seat in the congregation. A preacher was sitting in the pulpit behind Cartwright, and when this preacher saw General Jackson come in he pulled the coat-tail of Cartwright and spoke to him in an undertone, telling him that General Jackson was in the house. But as Cartwright paid no attention to him, he repeated his action and words several times. At last, when Cartwright was out of patience, he stopped his discourse and remarked: "My brother behind me keeps telling me that General Jackson is in the house. But who is General Jackson? Before the cross he is just like the rest of us; he must repent and turn to God or else he will be lost just like any

other sinner." When the services were ended General Jackson walked up to Cartwright and congratulated him on his frankness and courage.

This incident illustrates very well the kind of manliness which the pulpit must show if men are to be influenced by it. I have the greatest faith in a manly courage, on the part of the preacher, in order to attract crowds of men to his ministry. The preacher need not be coarse, and certainly not offensively personal, but he can tell men frankly where they live, how they are living, and what is necessary to put them on the right road to secure the life that now is and that which is to come. He can compel them to leave their hiding places by opening the doors which screen them from the public gaze, and when it is all over these men will thank the preacher for the courage he has displayed. The preacher of the twentieth century has a mission, in this respect, which exceeds in responsibility that of any other age in the whole history of the church. If the twentieth century preacher will heartily and earnestly accept this responsibility, there can be no doubt about the fact that the problem of men with respect to our church life will be more than halfway solved.

XXVII

THE PROBLEM OF WOMEN

Woman has always been a mystery to man, but at the same time she has never failed to be his idol. If he scold her, he ends by worshipping her. If she eats forbidden fruit and offers it to him, he takes it without protest, and then shares with her the consequences of their mutual disobedience. While the man is normally the head of the family, the woman is practically the neck; consequently the head cannot turn without the consent of the neck. But no matter how this is, it is unquestionably true that woman's influence is very great for good or evil in all the affairs of this world.

It has been said that women are the poetry of the world, in the same way as the stars are the poetry of heaven. Clear, light-giving, harmonious, they are the terrestrial planets that rule the destiny of mankind. But this does not express the whole truth. Women are much more than poetry. Indeed, they are generally more practical than men are; as business managers they often show the greatest ability, especially where small details are important to the success of the business.

It is not necessary at present to discuss the differences between men and women; at the same time, it may be well to consider these differences in some respects, in order to solve the problem of woman's true relation to the church. A writer in the *National Review* states these differences so clearly, and withal so philosophically, that I prefer to use his language instead of anything I might say myself. He says:

"The most obvious characteristics of the feminine intellect are delicacy of perceptive power and rapidity of movement. A woman sees a thousand things which escape a man. Physically even, she is quicker sighted. A girl is a better bird-nester than a boy; a woman marks a thing which passes over a man's eye too rapidly for him to perceive it. Mentally, she takes in many more impressions in the same time than a man does. A woman will have mastered the minutest details in another woman's dress, and noted all the evidences of character in the face, before a man, who has been equally occupied in examining her, knows the details of her features.

"If we were called upon to indicate the most marked and deepseated distinction between the minds of men and women, we should say that the minds of men rested in generals, and were stored with particulars, and that the minds of women rested in particulars, and were prolific in general ideas. Men, it is said, are occupied with facts, and so they are; but it is the characteristic of the highest and most typically masculine intellects always to be passing through facts on to the principle which binds them together, and to base their lives and practice on the results thus attained. Women, it is said, are always rushing into general ideas. So they are; but it is as a way to particular facts, and they move from and are guided by the special relations thus educed.

"The mind of a woman is more fluid, as it were, than that of a man. It moves more easily, and its operations have a less cohesive and permanent character. A woman thinks transiently, and in a hand-to-mouth sort of a way. She makes a new observation and a new deduction for each case, and consequently, also, a new general idea. A man, less quick, and less fertile, accumulates facts, collects them in classes, and combines them by principles; a woman's

mind is a running stream, ever emptying itself, and ever freshly supplied. She takes a bucketful when she wants it. A man's mind is a reservoir, arranged to work a water-wheel. Women are scarcely less steady and persevering than men in the pursuit of practical ends. They are more full of resources and expedients. They have a greater appreciation of, and a far greater power of wielding, small and indirect influences. They have tact, but they do not discuss practical matters efficiently when met together; they become discursive, set larks and run hares; each is occupied with her own idea, and several speak together. They do the work excellently, but they do not shine in the committee room."

With this analysis before us, we are now able to indicate specifically some important facts with respect to the work which women must do in and for the church, and which she can do better even than men.

(1) She can be the helper of those who preach the Gospel. I do not believe that women are in their true position when they go into the pulpit, or even on the platform, except on special occasions which seem to call for and justify an exception to the general rule. Of course, in the public meetings of women's societies, and in those exceptional cases where women are to lecture upon certain special subjects, there ought to be no objection to her appearing in either the pulpit or on the platform. But her course may well be questioned if she leaves the quieter duties of life for those involved in a continuous appearance either in the pulpit or on the platform. I do not propose to discuss her right to occupy such a position, or to enter upon such a work. It is not a question with me of right. I am looking at it wholly from the point of view of the appropriate. I am satisfied that a woman must be womanly in order to exert the best influence she can command, and

she will generally lose her womanliness in the exact ratio that she assumes to do the work which has always been recognised as man's exclusive sphere of action. It may be that men have claimed too much in this respect; it is not impossible to suppose that women may have succeeded better than men in the very things from which they are now practically excluded by virtue of public sentiment. But whether this is so or not, women must recognise this sentiment, or else their influence before the public will be largely destroyed.

But however this may be, so far as public ministrations are concerned, from either the pulpit or platform, it is unquestionably true that women may become very useful helpers to those who do preach the Gospel. The woman is often a better preacher in private than a man is, and this is especially true when she is dealing with women inquirers. In this particular service she may be of great advantage to the preacher of the twentieth century.

(2) Women ought to be used more effectively in the church than they have been in the past. Protestantism is especially weak with regard to the use it has made of women in the churches. Roman Catholicism owes very much of its success to precisely what Protestantism has neglected. Protestants may deride the notion of the worship of the Virgin Mary, and belief in what has been called the motherhood of God, but all the same this recognition of woman's influence is exactly what has made Romanism the power that it is. It does not help the matter to say that the Roman notion is entirely wrong. I am not discussing the right or wrong of the notion, but I am just simply talking about its influence. If the notion is wrong, and it certainly is, Protestants ought to find out what is exactly right with respect to the matter, and then act accordingly, rather than practically reject woman's

help entirely, simply because it has been used illegitimately. If it were not for the Roman Catholic sisterhood, it is my deliberate opinion that Roman Catholicism could not maintain its present influence for even a single decade, and it would not be fifty years until it would practically cease to be a religious power in the world. It is the women of the Roman Church, rather than the men, that give it the influence it possesses.

The same may be said of the Salvation Army. This army uses women; in fact puts them to the front, gives them a place which, in my judgment, they should not occupy; but all the same they are used, and wonderfully used, for the propagation of the army's ideas and plans.

Is there any lesson in these facts for our own churches? Certainly the minister of the Gospel, who expects his ministry to be an eminent success, cannot ignore entirely the most powerful latent influence in the churches simply because this influence has been used perhaps illegitimately by some religious bodies. Undoubtedly Protestants need not follow slavishly, with respect to women, either the Roman Catholic Church or the Salvation Army; but what Protestants ought to do is to consult the New Testament and give to women in the churches the place ascribed to them by apostolic precept and example, and when this is done, women will occupy a very different position from what they have occupied in the churches of the past two or three centuries.

(3) In our educational institutions women must have a fuller and clearer recognition. I speak specially of those institutions which are or should be dominated by religious influence. The discrimination with regard to women in our public schools and universities is a crying shame, but with that I have nothing to do at present, except to say that in many respects women are better teachers than men, and

therefore ought to have at least equal salary with men, instead of being about half paid as they now are. But what I wish to emphasis is the importance of distinctly women's schools and colleges for the special education of our young women who are to become the wives and mothers of the future. Mixed schools are well enough, or at least are not so objectionable, while children are under fourteen years of age; but between fourteen years and twenty no girl ought to be educated in a mixed school. She has special characteristics all her own. She is, during this period, forming a character either for good or evil. She ought to be placed in the most favourable environment for the development of a truly womanly character, and this cannot be done half so well as in schools where young women only are admitted.

I cannot at present discuss the reasons for this view of the matter. But from long observation and experience, I do not doubt that my conclusion is correct; and as I am urging the twentieth century preacher to make the most of woman's influence in his work, I would be untrue to my convictions, as well as make a very inadequate plea for woman's best influence, if I did not urge every preacher to encourage and sustain those schools and colleges where women are specially educated, not simply for society in its popular meaning, but for the church in its true meaning, which after all is the most important sphere of woman, unless we except the family circle.

But as already intimated, woman's influence should especially be felt in all the agencies of the church. It is in the church, and through the church, as a divine organisation, that woman's greatest influence is to be exerted. Here is her religious home, and it is in this she must seek to employ all her powers. Woman's mission is not to the world, but to the church. She is not sent *out* to proclaim the Gospel, but is rather sent *in* for the purpose of strength-

ening the faith, brightening the hope, and increasing the love of the saints of God. Hers is rather a subjective work, though her influence in its ultimate effects is not confined to the church. It is certainly true that the church is the "pillar and support of the truth"; hence it must be evident to every candid mind that the truth will succeed only as the church is made efficient in promulgating it.

Here, then, is the point to watch. Make the church what it ought to be, and the world will soon be converted to Christ. But how make the church what it ought to be? Certainly not by leaving almost wholly unemployed that portion of its membership which is capable of yielding it the most active and efficient service. Is not woman recognised as a servant of the church in the Scriptures? Then may she not rightfully labour in such ways as she can best advance the cause of Christ? Surely no one who hopes for the successful propagation of Christianity can deny her this privilege.

In visiting the sick woman may exert a matchless influence. In fact there are many cases where she alone can be beneficial, and in almost all cases she can render valuable service. Sympathy is frequently worth infinitely more than money. "Weep with those who weep," is a divine injunction; and it seems to be the nature of woman to understand at once, and sympathise with, the afflicted. How many pastors, during their ministrations in the sick room, have felt powerless in the presence of the kind words and gentle deeds of some mother in Israel! She seems to know at once just what to say, and when to say it. Is it necessary to be cheerful? It is not feigned upon her part, but seems to grow out of the necessity of the occasion. Are sympathetic words appropriate? They come from a heart overflowing with love. Is an exhibition of courage

essential to inspire confidence? Her frail form does not even tremble in the presence of death. Often have I felt utterly ashamed of my own feeble efforts to minister to the sick and dying, while watching the wonderful success of these angel visitors.

There is another work which woman can do most successfully. There are almost always persons in the church who need to be "instructed in the way of the Lord more perfectly." And wherever we find an ignorant Apollos, we need an earnest Priscilla to teach him what he should do. In no way will woman's influence yield greater returns than in this kind of labour. Her peculiar methods of working, and her relations to society in general, make her efforts in this direction almost irresistible. She needs but to be faithful to her mission, to understand her opportunities, and she can be instrumental in leading many hesitating souls to a stronger faith, and a more comprehensive knowledge in the divine life.

In all benevolent enterprises woman may perform an important part, and in the circulation of tracts, etc., she can succeed where men would utterly fail. Men will read a tract for the woman's sake, if for no other reason, and, reading it, they become interested in it for the truth's sake, and will then read it again for their own sake. I once knew a gentleman who would not listen to religious instructions except from a certain woman who was kind to him when he was sick. He would read anything she gave him, and listen to anything she said. Let our sisters think of it; they have it in their power to control the destiny of immortal souls! Can they, then, for a moment be indifferent to their responsibilities? Will they waste the precious time God has given them, in chasing the butterflies of fashion and folly, when they may be engaged in the grand and glorious work of leading the world to Christ? Surely

no true woman would hesitate for a moment which course to choose.

But, they may ask, how is all this to be done? They may say that they are willing to work—willing to do anything that will be of service in the Lord's cause, but then there is no one who will instruct them what to do or where to do it. They feel cut off, in a large degree, from the active agencies of the church. True, they feel it to be their duty to occupy their place at all the public meetings of the congregation. But they receive little or no encouragement to do anything else. They look around in vain for any organised movement among the sisters that will insure success. They say, give us encouragement and put us to work in a way where we can help one another, and then we will be, indeed and in truth, "helpers" of those who proclaim the Gospel of Christ. All this must be the work of the twentieth century preacher.

The great intellectual problems of the church have already been solved; the battles for religious freedom have been fought and won; and what the church needs now is more attention to the development of spiritual life. The weak must be strengthened, the ignorant instructed, the disconsolate comforted, and the heart-life of all brought up to the highest standard of Christian experience. In this department of labour must woman work. Here is where she is strongest, and here is just where she is needed in this active, restless, turbulent age. Let her then go forth upon her mission of mercy; let her cut the chains which now bind her to the obsolete ideas of mediæval Christianity, and soon will the future brighten with the glorious promise of the coming day, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

XXVIII

THE PROBLEM OF THE RICH

WEALTH, when properly understood, is character. Life always partakes of its environment, no matter what may be the predisposing influence of heredity. Certain tree frogs take the colour of the limb on which they rest. We cannot escape the power of association; and as this is always for either good or evil, it is of the utmost importance that we guard well our lives at this point. All contact that is not sanctified is dangerous; and yet it is contact that makes life really worth living. Isolation is always bad, and sometimes it is worse than unhallowed association. The man who buried his talent was no better than the man with five talents, though these should have been squandered. Profligacy in social life is to be preferred to unproductive, unsympathetic individualism. The former is wasteful and immoral, but the latter is selfish in the highest degree, without even the redeeming quality of productiveness.

When it is said that wealth is character, it is meant thereby that wealth enters into character and becomes a constituent part of it. It is much the habit, nowadays, in our ethical teaching, to separate the man from his belongings. We say the man is one thing and what he owns is another. But this method does not work out well in practice. The man becomes very much like the thing that most absorbs his attention. Love is not only the greatest thing in the world, but it is also the most powerful. We attach ourselves to the environment of wealth by the love of it, and the "love of money is a root of all evil." The picture of the man, in Bunyan's great allegory, with a muck rake,

is a faithful likeness of every mammon-worshipper. Even the Son of Man, wearing the crown of thorns, with his own tender hand cannot lift the miser's head to the skies. Wealth, when it fairly gets hold of us, as certainly shapes us and creates our characters as if we were cast into the very mould in which the dollars are coined.

The danger of wealth, therefore, is not altogether social. We shall come to notice that presently; but just now it is desirable to emphasise the fact that wealth produces character, and that, therefore, the reaction of wealth upon the individual is the first point to be considered in any intelligent and exhaustive treatment of the subject. This reaction is generally evil. I do not say it is always so. Perhaps it ought not to be so at all. Wealth gives opportunity, and opportunity is the measure of responsibility; but as opportunity is the measure of responsibility it can readily be seen how wealth increases our obligation to do good. But who actually does good in the ratio of increasing wealth? Now, if this ratio is not fully met in a corresponding benevolence, then the wealth must necessarily make the character worse rather than better. Surely this fact of itself makes wealth one of the most dangerous things to handle in all the world.

However, it is my present purpose to consider wealth from the point of view of our social life, our national life, and our church life. Of course its influnce upon the individual life must seriously affect its other relations; but just now I am concerned with wealth as a factor in the three relations I have indicated, and especially as regards our church life. The preacher will have to meet this problem of the rich, and it needs no argument to convince the well informed minister of the Gospel that this is one of the most difficult problems which he will have to solve, and if he should solve it wisely, he will have done much more for

the cause he represents than he could accomplish perhaps in any other way. He who can solve the problem of wealth, so that it shall occupy a normal position in the church, will deserve the lasting gratitude of every faithful minister of the Gospel.

Let us now briefly consider a few startling facts. The enormous increase of wealth in the United States is simply an appalling fact. It is estimated, from reliable data, that this increase is in the ratio of at least seven millions of dollars per day. But a still more startling fact is that this remarkable accumulation of wealth is practically in the hands of a comparatively few persons. In New York City alone there are about one thousand and two hundred individuals and estates that are each worth not less than one million dollars. That is, there are in that city about one thousand and two hundred millionaires, while in Brooklyn there are at least two hundred more, making in the two cities, or what is called Greater New York, one thousand and four hundred millionaires.

It is affirmed that eight members of the Vanderbilt family are worth at least two hundred and seventy-five millions of dollars, while the Standard Oil Company, composed of nine specially wealthy persons, is reckoned to be worth, in round numbers, at least one billion of dollars; and estimating at the rate of the accumulation of these fortunes in the past, in less than twenty-five years their united fortunes will amount to about three billions five hundred millions. It must be remembered also that there are several other very wealthy men in the United States who are not included in the estimates I have made. Not long ago twenty-one railroad magnates met in New York City to discuss the question of railroad competition, and it is said that these gentlemen represented the enormous sum of three billions of dollars.

The first remark which needs to be made concerning the foregoing facts and figures is, that not a few justify this enormous accumulation in the hands of these men, and actually look with pleasure upon this great wealth, because it adds to the glory of our country. But what has been the course of history with respect to such matters? Who does not know that wealth begets profligacy, and that the downfall of nations has usually started from the Temple of Fortune?

Success has its rightful place in every worthy civilisation, but nations, as well as individuals, need to study well the beatitude which says, "Blessed are those who have made financial failure, for thereby they have been taught that life does not consist in what a man hath." Jesus was the great exponent of a personality developed in poverty. His teaching corresponded to his environment. He said it was "easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God." We profess to follow Him and honour his teachings, but is it not a fact that we practically ignore both his example and words when we come to the question of wealth? It is easy to whittle down his meaning until it amounts to nothing at all; but this is a poor way to deal faithfully with the Word of God, and it is equally a poor way to deal honestly with ourselves. The fact is, no man has a right to own anything more than a reasonable living, unless the capital which he possesses is made to yield an income for the benefit of others. There is no need of that abnormal socialism, which is just now so popular with some writers, provided we can have a consecrated individualism which will lend itself to the good of the whole of society. When each individual comes to understand thoroughly his responsibilities, and is, at the same time, willing to discharge these in a manner commensurate with the best interest of every other individ-

ual, then we shall have the social life that is needed, and the only one that will stand the rugged tests of commercial intercourse. There is nothing so conservative as money, and yet there is nothing so sensitive. It often will not move under the most powerful appeal for sympathy and help, but it will tremble like an aspen leaf at the very first indication of danger to financial interests.

We have never yet, perhaps, quite understood the true value of wealth. Most people attach to it entirely too much importance. With some it means almost everything. It is the first and last question with them. With respect to the most delicate relations of life it is always the determining factor. If a marriage contract is to be considered, the parents often practically place their children upon the market as if they were ordinary articles of barter and sale. Indeed, the care for them is not always equal to the care exercised in the rearing of cattle, sheep, or even pigs. In the latter case there is some consideration shown for the kind of stock that is to be propagated, but nothing of the sort seems to have weight with those parents who are ready to sell their children for a price in "filthy lucre." Some time ago a lady remarked to me that a young woman friend had just married and had done so well, as the man she married owned fifteen hundred acres of land. The man himself was practically a nobody, or at most only a worthless animal. I replied by saying: "Of course the young woman did well; she went in for dirt, and got it."

Shame upon this whole thing! Many Americans condemn the aristocracy of blood, such as we find in European countries, but at the same time they do not hesitate to approve the aristocracy of Mammon—the meanest of all possible aristocracies. Our money kings in this country are the men who largely govern the country, in spite of our protest against kingcraft, and our constant affirmation of a

theoretical democracy. I say theoretical advisedly, because, as a matter of fact, our plea for government by the people, when thoroughly tested, is little more than a sham. Really, the mammon-worship in America has become a crying evil and a dangerous menace. The average American is too much inclined to change the wise man's admonition, "With all thy getting, get understanding," so as to read, "With all thy getting, get money." Still, it is well known that money-getting does not bring happiness. This fact was familiar to the world before the dawn of Christianity.

Neverthless it is well to remember that wealth in itself is not necessarily an evil. I have already intimated that wealth is character. This character may be good, or it may be bad. Everything depends upon how the wealth is acquired and how it is used after it is acquired. I have no sympathy with those men who are forever denouncing material things. There are not a few who imagine that they have a special mission to find fault with the world. But after all, Paul's view of the matter is better. He taught that we should "use the world as not abusing it." God made all things good, but man has sought out many evil inventions. Material wealth has its proper place, and in that place it may be a great blessing. But in order that it may be such, at least three things must be prayerfully considered:

(1) Wealth must be righteously accumulated. No benevolent use of wealth can possibly atone for unrighteousness in securing it. This is an important matter. The gift does not sanctify the altar, but the altar sanctifies the gift.

A million of dollars given to some college, university, or some other charitable institution or enterprise cannot make the giver right in the sight of God, if this gift comes out of

ill-gotten gains, by either dishonest methods or by oppression of the poor. Just here we touch a very serious point in our discussion. It is getting to be a habit to more than half apologise for illicit wealth, if this wealth is used for benevolent ends. The highway robber becomes a sort of semi-gentleman if he treats his victim with personal consideration, and afterwards sends a liberal donation to some benevolent enterprise. The Paul Cliffords and Eugene Arams are not all dead yet. It is true their modern representatives perform a somewhat different rôle, but all the same their principles are not changed. The man who makes a hundred millions of dollars by grinding the poor, or by dishonest methods in dealing with his fellow-men, is none the less a scoundrel if he tries to buy his way into public favour with large gifts, however helpful these gifts may be to those upon whom they are bestowed. Hence, the first and perhaps most important element in wealth is its righteous accumulation. Recently there has been considerable discussion with respect to the religious use of wealth which has been unrighteously accumulated. Undoubtedly this question is clearly involved in the ethical use of wealth, and I hope the discussion will continue until many rich men will come to understand that they cannot buy their way to public favour by making a few bequests of their ill-gotten gains.

(2) Just how much wealth a man may possess is a difficult question to settle. Within certain limits, the talent a man has for work and management must be a determining factor in fixing the bounds beyond which he must not go. All men cannot be treated exactly alike in this respect, any more than in other things. The man in Scripture who had five talents, made five talents more, and the one who had two talents, made two talents more. These were commended by our Divine Lord, while the man who had one

talent and hid this, and therefore did not make anything, was severely condemned. Where much is given, much will be required, but no one has so little given him that nothing shall be required at his hand. Still, our Lord's parable has its limitation, and perhaps purposely so. In any case, it is certain that He would not have justified an unreasonable capital with which to begin, to say nothing of allowing an increase of a hundred per cent. on the investment.

Anyway it is not difficult to see that our present disproportionment of wealth is a great economic crime. It is simply monstrous political economy that a few families should possess the larger part of the wealth of a country. However, as it is not my present design to offer an economic solution of several questions which might be raised at this point, I content myself with stating the evil in general terms and pass on to what seems at present to be more important.

(3) Even when wealth is righteously obtained and does not exceed a reasonable amount, in order that it may contribute to good character it must be used for noble ends. Good ethics will require a portion of this wealth to be expended upon self-culture and self-comfort. Whoever gives all he has to others will soon have nothing to give. A certain amount of reserve capital is essential to the maintenance of an income out of which benefactions can be drawn. There may be profligacy in giving as well as in spending. Nevertheless it will always be true that he who sows liberally will reap liberally.

God not only loves the cheerful giver, but it is only the cheerful giver who occupies the right economic point of view. There can be no legitimate accumulation which is not founded upon normal giving. All fortunes that are made without a recognition of this law, are fortunes which have no legitimate place in the divine system of econom-

ics, and consequently they are fortunes which constantly threaten the best interests of human society.

At this point we touch the very vitals of the question under consideration. What I have intimated here helps to solve a number of the difficult problems with which the subject is environed. It probably offers the best solution of the limitations of wealth, the matter which will soon be considered in the present discussion. It is probable that no limitations at all need be insisted upon in the case of any one who observes the divine law of money-making. When all methods are righteous, and when there is no desire to hoard wealth, and when giving is always commensurate with the law of supply and demand, then there need be very little, if any, concern about more wealth than can be legitimately used for the glory of God and the good of men. The man who honestly makes money for the sole purpose of doing good with it, will probably not abuse his success by an unreasonable accumulation of capital. Hence the right motive in money-making cannot be too highly esteemed or too strongly emphasised. Let us now consider the question, How may the rich be saved?

This I think will be regarded as a question of prime importance; but with many minds it is already settled by the practical exclusion of the rich from the Kingdom of Heaven. No doubt there are very many who believe it impossible for a rich man to be saved under any condition. This, however, must be regarded as a hasty conclusion. We have already seen that a reasonable amount of wealth is not only not sinful, but is also actually essential to the best interests of society. God has not placed a premium upon poverty, nor has He exalted laziness into the dignity of a virtue. Thrift is the normal law of life in both the temporal and spiritual realms. But thrift does not imply the hoarding of immense estates. It rather implies the

legitimate distribution of wealth so that all may be partakers of its benefits without any of that feeling of degradation which inordinate accumulation begets. Our contention is that no one should be regarded as rich in the sense of the term as used by our Saviour, while he is conscientiously using a reasonable amount of wealth as capital with which to do business for the Lord. I have already indicated that this business includes what is best for both the individual using the capital and the community which he seeks to bless. Such a person should never be called a rich man in any sense that makes it hard for him to enter into the Kingdom of God.

But there are very rich people who may rightfully be included in our Lord's reference; and it is concerning this class that I wish to speak in what follows. That it is a numerous class cannot be doubted, for I greatly fear that most people who are regarded as wealthy can scarcely "read their titles clear" in the conditions I have stipulated, wherein a reasonable amount of wealth is justifiable. In short, it is highly probable that a large majority of the wealthy will fail at one or more of the points I have suggested as essential to the sanctification of wealth. Anyway, there is an appalling number of people, regarded as wealthy, who certainly need salvation, and who probably come within the scope of our Divine Lord's inclusion, when He said it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God.

However, it is well to notice that this language does not imply the impossibility of such a man as our Lord refers to being saved. That he is in great danger of being lost cannot be doubted, and that his salvation will be a difficult undertaking may at once be accepted as certain. But all this does not make it impossible, for even our Lord admitted to his disciples the possibility of his salvation.

With God at least, his salvation is within range of possibility. Of course we are now considering the rich man who is really lost, and in my judgment all rich men who have made their money by dishonest methods, and are hoarding the same for selfish purposes, are as certainly lost as it is possible for any one to be.

The first thing that strikes us as somewhat remarkable about all this matter is the evident indifference of the Christian world with respect to the salvation of the rich. In the time of our Saviour it was probably true that the salvation of the poor was entirely neglected. Indeed, it is fairly certain that this class was practically abandoned to its fate with respect to both material and spiritual things. It was doubtless this fact which gave point to the message which Christ sent to John. Among the things specified in this message was, "The poor have the gospel preached to them." This announced a new era for a class which had long been separated from all the good things of the present life. It was a harbinger of hope to them. Nor was their expectation in vain. From that time to the present the chief concern of Christian workers seems to have been about the salvation of the poor. The numerous missions and mission churches which can be found in all Christian lands, as well as the great activity in foreign mission work, attest the deep interest felt in the salvation of the poor.

Surely, I do not wish to abate the enthusiasm with respect to this matter "one jot or tittle." Indeed, I would increase this enthusiasm if I could. At the same time I think it is quite possible to overestimate the comparative value of work in this direction. I have already intimated that Christ's interest grew out of the condition in which the poor were found during his earthly ministry. He came to "seek and to save the lost," whether rich or poor, and

as the poor were included in the lost, they at once challenged and obtained his interest, not because they were strategically considered of more value to his cause, but because his all-embracing love could not exclude them. Doubtless many of these poor had little or no claims upon his sympathy, if the causes which led to their poverty had been severely taken into account. Poverty is very often, if not generally, the result of habits which are themselves strongly condemned by our Divine Lord. It is unreasonable, therefore, to suppose that this class should be specially selected as the recipients of the divine favour. Evidently no such interpretation of facts is needed in order to emphasise the interest which Christ manifested on behalf of the poor and needy. On one occasion he practically protested against an unwise use of means in helping the poor. He said in effect, "The poor you have with you always, and consequently you will have plenty of opportunities to contribute for their benefit, but you cannot have me with you long; you should therefore choose the better part, and for the present give your preference to me."

Such, at least, is my interpretation of the case when all the facts are taken into consideration; and if my view be correct, then it is evident that there is no reason why poor, obscure, and uninfluential people should be preferred in the Kingdom of God to those who from a strategic point of view may be of much more value, if they can once be brought to that state of mind and heart which will entitle them to the hearty fellowship of Christians.

My contention, as regards this matter, has far-reaching consequences. Some way or other many intelligent Christians have reached the conclusion that it is their duty to contribute liberally for the education of orphans and indigent children, while these same persons will not give a penny to provide ways and means for the education of

those who are able to help themselves. The strategy of this philanthropy is all wrong. I do not say that they should give less for the former, but they ought to give more for the latter. The most influential classes of the community are those that need to be most wisely directed. Who are the young men and young women who give tone and character to the communities in which we live? Speaking broadly, they are certainly not those upon whom we usually expend our charities. Indeed, if the rich were properly educated and were faithfully instructed in the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, there would be little or no difficulty in securing all the means necessary for the education and maintenance of the poor. The latter work lags behind because the former is largely neglected. The inhabitants of our slums are left to perish because the dwellers in marble palaces are thought to be able to take care of themselves, while as a matter of fact these "well-to-do" people need the sympathy and help of Christians probably more than the poor do.

As proof that I am now standing upon solid ground, I wish to refer to the work of the Salvation Army. As is well known, this Army originated in East London. It had for its object specially the rescue of the poor in that thickly populated district. General Booth appealed to the benevolence of the people for a liberal support in his efforts to rescue what he termed the "submerged tenth," or the very poor to be found mainly in the slums of the overcrowded populations of the great cities of England. He promised, if a liberal response was made to his call, not more than twenty years should elapse before poverty would only be the name of something that had been, but was no more. The time is now past for the fulfilment of this promise. Some of us at least know what the result has been. As a matter of fact the whole scheme, so far as

making any appreciable difference in the extent or character of poverty is concerned, has been a most signal failure. That this Army has done some good in some places need not be disputed, but that it has done, upon the whole, more harm than good will scarcely be doubted by any one who has watched its progress and who is capable of estimating its influence. East London, where the army originated, remains practically untouched at the points where General Booth promised reformation, while the Salvation Army is now no longer remembered by the inhabitants. Probably there are not five hundred members of the Army to be found in the whole district, though there are not less than a million of inhabitants in that part of London where the Army originated.

The reason for this failure is not far to seek. The rescue work of the Salvation Army begins at the wrong end of the line. Pauperism, in East London, flourishes because excessive wealth predominates in West London. The slums of the East are constantly fed from the palaces of the West. This being true, if we want to cure the evils of poverty we must stop the factories where poverty is made. It is the dissipating, illegal struggle for unnecessary wealth, the constant grinding of all that is worthy in manhood in the mills of the rich that finally ends in the miserable slum population of our great cities.

What, then, is the remedy? First of all let us stop the factories. We must, if possible, reach these rich people with the Gospel of salvation, for to save them is practically to save society. This, in my judgment, is the problem which confronts us for the new century. The question is, not primarily, shall we save the poor? but, shall we save the rich? Some time ago I was at a public meeting in London where the former of these problems was discussed, and I took occasion to call attention to the far greater im-

portance of the latter problem. I tried to make it plain that in our anxiety to save the poor, we were really overlooking the salvation of the rich, and that this failure to perceive the main and vital question was fatal to all our missionary efforts. I suggested that if we would provide suitable missions to the rich, and expend even an equal amount of effort on their rescue that we do on the rescue of the poor, the result would be an astonishing revelation to all of us. My suggestion seemed to startle all my hearers, and from expressions after I had spoken it was evident that many believed that I had furnished a key to the solution of a very difficult problem. Anyway, I believe that the crying need of the present day is a gospel for the rich.

But, after all, it still remains a question as to how the rich may be reached with any presentation of the Gospel that will redeem them from their present seeming indifference to religious matters, and help them to contribute to the general good of their less fortunate neighbours. It is readily conceded that we have here precipitated a problem which is as difficult as it is important. Still I believe it can be solved, and believing thus, I am willing to offer some suggestions which may at least help to a fuller and more satisfactory treatment of the whole case, by some one who is able to grasp all the issues involved. Let us, then, briefly consider the following points, which may help to throw light in a very dark place.

(1) The strong arm of the law ought to be used in bringing about a more equal distribution of wealth. I am not unmindful of the delicacy of pressing a point like this. A senseless cry for individual rights has often completely drowned the voice of justice. I have already intimated that there is nothing so sensitive as capital. This will explain why the problem now before us is more difficult than

any other social problem. We are compelled to accept limitations in nearly every other thing, why not in money getting? Yet this last is the very thing wherein we claim to go beyond all reasonable endurance, and at the same time we deny the right of any one to question our liberty. If there was only one man in all the world, he might have the right to amass as large a fortune as he could make, but as society is now constituted, I claim that no one has a right to do for his own selfish purposes what undoubtedly works evil to his neighbours.

But it may still be asked, What laws are necessary to properly regulate the accumulation of wealth? I would not make these laws wholly arbitrary, for the reason that I am anxious to save the rich man, rather than drag him into a state of mind which would probably make his salvation an impossibility. Righteous laws make for righteousness. These are educational in their tendency, and though they may not have converting power, they are the forerunners of the Gospel, as John the Baptist was the forerunner of Christ. Legislation, as a finality, will not do in saving souls; but as preparing the way for salvation, it may have considerable value. Even battleships and cannon balls have their place in breaking down the fortifications of evil and opening gates to the saving influence of the Gospel. Nevertheless, in the present case, I would be careful to start with such legislation as would be reasonable to all who are not irretrievably lost.

As an example of what I would propose, the following will be sufficient. Let there be laws passed which will make labour and capital coördinates in every enterprise where they are called upon to assist each other. Let the coöperative system be compulsory in all cases where capital employs labour, or where labour seeks to employ capital. In short, let every labourer be legally entitled to receive a

just proportion of the income from the business, and let him also have the right to vote to the extent of his income in all the affairs of the general management.

Of course I am not attempting to work out this plan in detail. It seems unnecessary to do more than indicate the principle which should be adopted. Such a principle as has been suggested must appear reasonable to all right-thinking people, and its educational influence upon those who are now rich would undoubtedly be very great. At any rate, I should like to see this plan thoroughly tried by supporting it with such legislation as would make it obligatory upon both capitalists and labourers.

(2) Much might be done through our colleges, the public press, churches, etc., in creating a public conscience that will so severely condemn excessive money-getting as will make it impossible for selfish millionaires to live at peace in any well-educated community. At present these millionaires are flattered, courted, and even feasted. They are often the pets of the communities in which they live. They are held up as examples to the rising generation. Children are exhorted to be like these gentlemen of fortune, or if the exhortation is absent, it is perhaps because the child does not need it, as it generally begins very early to aspire to great riches. This is often the chief goal set before young boys and girls. Their training is mainly in the direction of wealth-getting; and this is so much the case that, in most instances, everything else is subordinated to this one end; indeed, everything else is summoned to contribute to the accumulation of a fortune.

Now all this should be changed; and it can be changed whenever we are ready to preach the Gospel as faithfully to the rich as we are to preach it to the poor. Doubtless such a change would result practically in a revolution. But this is just what is needed. Christianity is more than

a revelation; it is in fact a revolution. The Apostles were accused of "turning the world upside down," and this accusation was not untruthful. The charge expressed precisely what they did, and what they did was just what was needed to be done. Precisely so is it at present. Christianity as a revolution has been impeded in its progress by Christianity as a revelation. We have stopped to discuss the origin and literary character of the Bible while we have constantly neglected to enforce its great uplifting and revolutionising principles. The Gospel is God's dynamite, and if it is allowed to occupy its proper place it will soon destroy all the strongholds of sin, and among these the temple of Mammon will be completely demolished. What is needed, then, is an honest and efficient system of education through all those potent instrumentalities known as school, college, university, public press, and the church. I mention the church last, not because it is least in importance, but because it ought to practically voice all the other instrumentalities with a sanction that it alone can give. The preacher of the twentieth century must lead this crusade against the excessive accumulation of wealth.

(3) I believe it is possible by faithful preaching through all the instrumentalities I have mentioned, to create a better conception of what success is, than is now held by the average millionaire. It is perhaps impossible to legislate against nature. The desire to succeed is a natural instinct. But can it not be shown that money-getting is, after all, the lowest kind of success? Just here we touch a vital chord in this whole matter. What is the kind of music which this chord rings out into the ear of the world? Undoubtedly most of our ideals are wrong. Many of us are working toward ends which are unworthy of us. The world's greatest hero is He who contradicted nearly all the maxims and ambitions of men during his earthly ministry.

But He stands unrivalled to-day in the affections of the people. Do we look to millionaires, military heroes, or great earthly rulers for examples of the highest success? Certainly not; we look to the meek and lowly Jesus, the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, Him who made Himself of no reputation, who taught that he who humbleth himself shall be exalted, and that though rich, the highest duty is to become poor for the benefit of others. He is our highest ideal of success as well as greatness, for this once obscure Nazarene has brought the world practically at his feet, and is to-day the best example of a successful career to be found anywhere in history.

Now how has this success been achieved? Surely not by laying up treasures on earth. Surely not by subordinating righteousness to the low business of money-getting. Surely not by Mammon-worship. Surely not by accumulating a vast fortune and using it for selfish purposes. Christ's success is wholly owing to the fact that He taught and lived in direct opposition to everything that now makes it possible for a man to be a millionaire in this life. Can we not make men act so that they will find the success for which they sigh, by following the way that Christ went? In my opinion Christians ought to make an earnest effort in this direction, and thereby show their willingness at least to use every possible means for the salvation of the rich.

What then is the conclusion of the whole matter? This at least: Something can certainly be done to save a class that many have abandoned as hopeless. It is not affirmed that all can be saved. Neither can all the poor be saved. There will always be some who will reject any worthy gospel that may be sent to them. But it is encouraging to be assured that many of the rich will hear, believe and obey, if they are properly instructed in reference to their position and responsibility. At any rate, the issues involved are

so momentous that no Christian ought to hesitate to make an honest and earnest effort to realise even more than I have sketched in ideal.

Perhaps we ought not to expect very much to be accomplished immediately. The difficulties that must be overcome are really appalling. Yet we must remember that "with God all things are possible." This is our hope. With this clear statement of our Divine Lord before us, we can work and patiently wait for results. Little by little the work will be done. Anyway, the thing to be accomplished is so important, and the very thought of its accomplishment so inspiring, that I feel confident many will be willing to labour in this direction when they are once persuaded that some success may be achieved.

With respect to the evils referred to in this lecture, undoubtedly "judgment must begin at the House of God." There must be no mistake about this matter. Some of us are claiming long and loudly that we are pleading for a return to primitive Christianity. But is it not true that not a few have confined this plea to the simple elements of the Gospel, which introduce into Christ? No doubt this much is very valuable, and I would not have any one undervalue the importance of urging restoration at this point. But is it not quite possible to put so much emphasis in one place that other things are practically obscured? While I do not believe that the Sermon on the Mount contains everything in detail that needs to be considered with respect to the religion of Christ, I do believe that we cannot wilfully neglect what that sermon contains without suffering immense loss, both with respect to our own character and the influence our lives may have upon others.

Money-getting for money's sake is a crying evil, but the time has certainly come when Christians at least should understand that they may "use the world, but not abuse

it." In any case they should be made to realise that they cannot worship both God and Mammon. The laying up of treasures upon earth cannot safely occupy the attention of God's children. Life is too short and there is too much to be done to allow, for a moment, of such perversion of opportunity. Every Christian is here to do good. Of course this involves a proper care for himself and his family; but beyond providing for these, what is needful for education and reasonable comfort, no Christian man has a right to lay up a dollar. As has already been intimated, he may retain enough means for a reasonable capital on which to do business for the Lord; but whatever is beyond this is sin, and the sooner he learns this fact the sooner the plea for a return to primitive Christianity will be understood and respected.

Of course it is impossible to lay down any hard and fast rules by which a matter of this kind can be determined. Perhaps it is better to leave it to the individual conscience, and that is precisely why I have urged the necessity of educating that conscience by all the means at command. This education should begin in our common schools. It should continue through the colleges and universities. It should be the cardinal feature in the preaching and administrations of every church. If possible, the state itself, by wholesome laws, ought to be made to supplement all our educational forces. We have been trying to save the poor, and usually our pleas for benevolence have been for this purpose. I would not have the claims of the poor ignored, but I hope that the time is now come when the pulpit at least will give no uncertain sound as to the need of saving the rich. When the rich are saved there will not be much trouble about saving the poor. Let us begin at the right end of the line, and then the great work of saving the

world may be reasonably assured within the not very distant future.

It is admitted the task is not an easy one. The battle with our lower nature is always hotly contested by the forces of evil. This is exactly the ground on which Satan makes his most determined stand. But this is the very reason why Christians should make a brave effort to render their attack successful. A great victory won at this point would be worth a thousand ordinary triumphs. If Mammon can be defeated, then the future success of Christianity is practically assured. The most determined enemy with which Christianity has to contend is the " almighty dollar," and if this enemy can be conquered, the world can soon be taken for Christ. Is it not time, therefore, that Christians should inaugurate an earnest campaign for the salvation of the rich? Let every Christian answer this question for himself in the light of all the facts of the case, and in view of the overwhelming responsibilities involved.

The preacher of the Gospel, especially, must face this question at the present time. Will he do it heroically? If so, he must set his community on fire by burning this question into all hearts until avarice and greed shall be utterly consumed in the enthusiasm of the people for a righteous division of wealth and the salvation of all men, whether they be rich or whether they be poor.

XXIX

PROBLEM OF SOCIAL LIFE

The three great circles, wherein the Christian must form his character and exert his influence, are the family, the church, and what is called society. In spite of any protest he may make, he will be compelled, more or less, to come in contact with social life, or that circle of fraternity which is a sort of common ground where all conditions of people may meet without respect to anything, except those conventionalities which furnish the boundary lines of social relations. It is true that these boundary lines are sometimes very arbitrary and are drawn without any regard whatever for real merit; but all the same they are imperious in their demands, and when strictly observed, Byron was not far wrong when he said:

> "Society is now one polished horde,
> Formed of two mighty tribes, the bores and bor'd."

Nevertheless there is a sense in which the Christian must, to some extent at least, come in touch with the social life outside of the church.

It is certain the church itself should become the social centre for all its members. Indeed, it seems to have been the purpose of its Founder to make the church distinctly and emphatically a home for all his followers. From this point of view the church is much more than a worshipful assembly. It furnishes exactly the conditions which are needful for developing a true social life, avoiding on one hand the exclusiveness of individualism, and on the other, the latitudinarianism of what is called society.

Nevertheless, it is probably impossible for all church members to confine themselves entirely to their respective churches, as regards their social life; and consequently it is well to understand just how far Christians may go in mingling with the world in the social life which it provides.

That much of this social life is evil and evil continually needs no demonstration to those who are acquainted with it and its influence upon the Christian character. At the present time there seems to be a tendency to let the world, the flesh, and the devil practically control nearly all social functions, and then Christians attend these functions, and thereby give respectability to them, and a sort of license that half sanctifies what is said and done. In short, much of the social life of the present time is a monstrous dissipation, a formidable obstacle to the development of spirituality in the churches, and a destructive influence to those activities which are essential to the development of real Christian manhood and womanhood. The preacher of the twentieth century will find this problem standing right in the way of all his efforts to make his ministry a pronounced success, and until this problem is solved he will be unable to make very much progress in either evangelising the unconverted or in building up the church members in faith, hope, and love.

How then may this problem be solved? I am not vain enough to believe that I can offer a certain solution for it in all cases, but I think I am justified in believing that the following suggestions may be helpful in many respects:

(1) The preacher must urge upon his people, and especially his young people, the evil tendencies of fashionable social life. He need not stop to prove that the various amusements which are introduced in this life are in themselves essentially evil. There is perhaps nothing in itself, or at least by itself, a necessary evil. Practical evil comes

from association. The very thing we call society is just where evil finds both its root and flower. It is the soil in which evil grows. It is where our young people become intoxicated and are led into all kinds of excesses, simply because society, as at present organised, is a hotbed for all abnormal and evil growth. The preacher will find it necessary to guard his people, and especially his young people, against entering too freely this territory which is so amply provided with that which vitiates the taste and practically destroys the love of spirituality.

(2) The preacher must teach the members of his church the folly of seeking the highest possible joy in these effervescent pleasures which do not satisfy even when they are tested to the fulness of their power, and do not last beyond the hours of their transitory indulgence. It is not a question, therefore, as to whether this particular thing is right or wrong in itself. It is rather a question as to its influence upon the life of the Christian. Does this influence tend towards good or evil? Does it tend to break down the best elements of character? These are the questions which must be settled, rather than the abstract right or wrong which is usually the main consideration when our social customs and habits are under discussion. As a matter of fact, earnest Christian men and women have no time to spare for such frivolous amusements as are often the staple means of entertaining at nearly all our social functions. Time is a precious gift, opportunity is a jewel. To use this time wisely and well and to seize this opportunity for gracious purposes ought to be the highest ambition of every consecrated soul in the kingdom of Christ. This being true, no Christian can afford to lend himself or his influence in any way to the maintenance or support of the fashionable social life, to which attention has been called. Every Christian has better work to do,

and he really has no time to waste in such trivial pastimes as are usually indulged in at the popular social functions of the day.

(3) The worst is yet to be told. The influence of the dissipations of fashionable social life unfits Christians for the enjoyment of spiritual things. We all know how a habit will generally determine our tastes. Food, that may be repulsive at first, will, by continued use, lose its repulsiveness and become grateful to the taste. Nearly all our most vicious habits have become dominant over us by simple cultivation. But not the least danger of this cultivation is its tendency to drive out better habits and unfit us for the enjoyment of the food that would nourish and help to build up real Christian character. Church services become a dreary monotony to those who find special delight in a ball room, the theatre, and the card table. As proof of this it may be stated, without fear of contradiction, that those professing Christians, who habitually attend these places of amusement, are seldom if ever regular attendants at the prayer meeting. The two things are incompatible.

Let no one misunderstand me at this point. I recognise the fact that men and women are social beings, and they must have some sphere in which they can satisfy, to a reasonable extent, the social demands of their natures. A hermit life is an abnormal life. Convents and nunneries can never correct the evils which usually attend social indulgence. Unlawful repression of the social nature is no remedy for social evils. At the same time it must be remembered that society, as it is now formed, cannot meet the requirements of a true Christian socialism. There is a great deal of truth in what Bulwer Lytton has said: "Society is a long series of uprising ridges, which from the first to the last offer no valley of repose. Wherever you take your stand, you are looked down upon by those

above you, and reviled and pelted by those below you. Every creature you see is a farthing Sisyphus, pushing his little stone up some Lilliputian molehill. This is our world." Such being the case, it evident that the true Christian cannot find satisfaction in a society like this. The natural social sphere of the Christian is in the Church of God; and he ought to find in this everything necessary to meet all the social demands of his nature. To provide such a social life in the church as will do this is one of the problems which the twentieth century preacher must try to solve. I believe he can solve it if he is wise; and the following suggestions may be of considerable value, especially to those preachers who have not had much experience in pastoral life.

(1) Let the preacher make his church life so active as to give employment to every member of his church. It is said that the devil can always find work for idle hands to do. Most people, and especially young people, must have something to do. One of the constant cries of a young life is for something to do. The mother while training her child hears this cry constantly, and has to provide for it in some way or other. The child cannot be left idle. Neither can the young child of God be left with nothing to do. Let pastors put the young people to work, and keep them at work, and they will not care to run after the "weak and beggarly elements of the world." Make them to realise that they are doing noble work for the Master, and they will find in this a happy release from the allurements of what is called society.

(2) Fill the young people with the joys of spiritual life as contradistinguished from carnal life, and they will not be long in losing their taste for the latter. In every church there ought to be special meetings for the training of the young. At these meetings it should be distinctively

and emphatically set forth that young Christians should seek the development of their spiritual natures, rather than the physical and psychical. The latter need not be discounted. The whole man, body, soul, and spirit, should be normally developed, but not one of these out of proportion with the others. Especially must the spiritual have dominence. When man fell his spiritual nature went down; through his renewal in Christ Jesus the spiritual nature is again elevated to regnancy. This position must be maintained, and everything that is needful for this should be provided in our church life.

(3) In correcting the evils which belong to an inordinate indulgence in the social life of the world, the preacher must be careful not to create a reaction which will run into selfishness. I have already intimated that we must have some outlet for the satisfaction of our social natures. The Apostle Paul was right when he said to the Romans, "None of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself." A selfish life is even worse than a life of illegitimate social indulgence. It is better to waste five talents upon others than to hide one talent under a bushel. It is possible to consider even profligacy as a better life than an extremely selfish life which has no centre but self, and no outlet for the helpfulness of others.

Nevertheless, there is really no place for selfishness in the Church of God. We are members one of another. If one member suffers, all should suffer with it; if one member is honoured, all the members should rejoice with it. This being the fact, there ought not to be much difficulty in finding the highest possible pleasure in the associations of the church; and when the preacher can bring his people to realise that the only worthy and lasting enjoyments of social relationship can be found in Christian society, the problem of social life will at once be practically solved.

XXX

THE PROBLEM OF THE PRAYER MEETING

The prayer meeting has come to be a prominent feature in nearly every church. Whether this is wise or not is scarcely a question for discussion at present. Doubtless the prayer meeting has come to stay. It is now practically established, and established institutions, whatever they may be, have usually a prolonged existence. Anyway, it is not my purpose to advocate a discontinuance of the prayer meeting, even though it should be conceded that it is not just now filling an important function in the church. What I wish to say will be in the way of suggestion with respect to making the prayer meeting more useful, and even more popular, than it seems just now to be.

(1) The prayer meeting should be definitely what its name implies. It should be for prayer and not for even Bible study, and certainly not for long and tedious exhortation. I do not say that no Bible study should be tolerated. There are times when this may be a useful disposition of the hour, but this should never be such a leading feature as to discount the devotional feature.

I emphasise the matter of making the prayer meeting distinctively for prayer because there is a constant tendency in most communities to make it almost everything else. I have known many men who will always speak at the prayer meeting if they have half a chance, but who will never pray unless they are especially asked to do so, and even then they pray in a very perfunctory manner. There may be times when a few words of earnest exhorta-

tion will be appropriate and even impressive and helpful, but no speaking should be allowed as long as the prayer feeling runs high. The presiding officer may by wise selection of words say something now and then that will help the flowing tide, but he must never speak long enough, or allow any one else to speak long enough, to retard that tide.

It may be said by some that my suggestion to confine the prayer meeting almost exclusively to prayers cannot be made a success, as most people will become weary of a sort of monotony which will surely prevail if nothing but prayers are offered. Of course, I do not mean that no song shall be sung, but even the singing should be of a very devotional character and should be lively and hearty. In short, everything should be on fire, and then there will be no difficulty about monotony. I have known some prayer meetings where even thousands attended and yet not a single speech of any kind was made during the hour. In my judgment the prayer meeting can be made much more effective for good, and even much more popular, if the speaking should be entirely eliminated.

(2) I have been frequently asked to say how a prayer meeting should be conducted. I have uniformly answered it should not be conducted at all. Conducting is one of the things that kill the prayer meeting. Let the prayer meeting take its own course. Whatever conducting is necessary should be done before the people assemble. If the preacher will impress upon the church members the importance of spending a little time in their closets before they assemble in the prayer meeting, this will be an important preparation for imparting the fervour which is so essential to make a prayer meeting what it ought to be. Let the heat be generated in every heart before the prayer meeting begins, and then there will not be much difficulty

about sustaining the interest for even a longer time than is usually devoted to such meetings.

But however this may be, I cannot emphasise too strongly the importance of avoiding anything like stereoperfunctity, if a prayer meeting is to be made an effective place for spiritual development and spiritual enjoyment.

(3) It has been said the prayer meeting is the thermometer of the church; if so, I am fearful that in most places the spiritual mercury runs low. Undoubtedly a church should be "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." And it should also "continue steadfastly in prayer." The prayer meeting ought to be a place where the fire of souls may be kindled into practically a glowing furnace of enthusiasm for the great work of saving men. Indeed, the best missionary sermon that can be preached to a church is an earnest, glowing, enthusiastic prayer meeting. I do not mean by this, however, that the enthusiasm should take on too much objective manifestation. While the flame should be unmistakably noticeable, it should be quiet and restful in its outward expression. "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength," is a text which should be frequently remembered at the prayer meeting. Demonstrations of the Spirit are not usually attended by storms or earthquakes, but by the still small voice which speaks of the presence of God without unusual excitement. It is the steady glow that is needed, not the lightning flash, accompanied by the thunder's deep portentous roar. The prayer meeting should be a restful place for weary souls; a place where spiritual power is augmented by the union of the spiritual glow in each individual heart; and it can be made such a place only by a prayerful preparation at home, and the avoidance of all formality when the assembly comes together for prayer.

Should these simple suggestions be carefully put into

practice it is possible, I think, to make the prayer meeting a much greater power for good than it is at present. This meeting has not outlived its usefulness; but it certainly needs reformation. It is altogether too stilted, too perfunctory, too formal. It needs freedom, freedom of the Spirit, freedom to be what it must be, if it may be counted a profitable institution of the church. The preacher can do much toward bringing about this reformation. He cannot do this by scolding the members who are present because others stay away. Let him begin the reformation by infusing into the meeting a happy spirit, a cheerful spirit, a spirit that is eminently hopeful, that looks on the bright side of things, and is not constantly reminding the brethren that not one-third of the members of the church are attending the prayer meeting. This scolding will not bring the results desired. Rather let the news go out what a joyful place the prayer meeting is, and how helpful it is to all who attend it with proper preparation of heart. This news will soon get around among the members, and they will quickly come up to see what the Lord is doing for those who wait upon Him. Let the preacher see to it that wings are given to this good news, and he will soon have such a prayer meeting as will impress the whole community where the church is located.

Before closing this consideration of the prayer meeting, it may be well to make a few suggestions with respect to order. While all that is purely formal should be avoided as far as possible, there are a few things which are necessary in any profitable meeting of the church.

(1) Some one must preside. This need not always be the pastor of the church. Indeed, it is much better if different members should take their turn in this important service. Speaking broadly, it is better for the pastor to select the president for each meeting, and the one selected

should be notified at least a week in advance of the time when he is expected to serve.

(2) When the meeting begins there ought to be no calling upon certain persons to take part. The meeting should be free to all, with the simple condition that everything shall be done "decently and in order." Generally there will be no difficulty about this matter. If it is distinctly a prayer meeting, there is sure to be no difficulty. If, however, license is given to any one who may desire to speak, probably some one who cannot speak at all to edification will take up much of the time. In such a case it is the duty of the president to make short work of his harangue by calling him down. However, all this can be avoided when the prayer meeting is held to its legitimate sphere.

(3) A most excellent idea is to announce some special object of prayer for each evening. Christians sometimes pray aimlessly. They go through a sort of form, but they do not seem to know themselves exactly what it is they want. There is nothing like specific prayer. We should be definite with God, and then we will not need so many words as we sometimes use. When our prayers are specific they will always be short, and short prayers are not only Scriptural, but are absolutely essential in order to make a prayer meeting a helpful means to spiritual development.

XXXI

THE PROBLEM OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

A GOOD Sunday School may be to a church what a fountain is to a stream. Hence, it may be the source whence the church receives its main supply. But the good Sunday School is rather the exception than the rule as respects our present church life. Some of our Sunday Schools are worse than none at all. The church would be better without them.

This is not always the fault of any one in particular. No church can have a good Sunday School without children. In some of our churches there are not enough children to make a Sunday School worth while. Indeed, there are many communities where the number of children is growing "fine by degrees and beautifully less." The old-fashioned neighbourhood, with its numerous young boys and girls, is apparently now an exception in country life; and even in towns and cities it frequently happens that there are comparatively few young people in some of the churches.

But it is possible to have a multitude of children at command and yet have a very poor Sunday School, or at least one which results in not much real good. A Sunday School without teachers is like a waggon without wheels; and this is often why the Sunday School is practically a failure. I do not mean that the Sunday School may not have a plentiful supply of what are *called* teachers. I think that many schools have only pretences for teachers—people who are wholly incompetent to do the work assigned to

them. In my judgment the best talent of every church should be used in the Sunday School. If it be true that if we train up a child in the way it should go, it will not depart from this way when it grows old, then surely there is no more important work to be found in the whole area of the religious world than teaching the young. But some way or other, many have concluded that almost any one can teach a class in the Sunday School. The main thing is thought to be to possess the ability or tact to interest the children whether they are instructed or not. But the main difficulty is not met by this loose disposition of the case. Many of the teachers are not only incompetent to instruct, but are wholly incompetent to keep from instructing wrongly. They mislead the children. They teach them what is not true. This teaching is often vicious, and does infinitely more harm than good. I think I can safely say that fully nine-tenths of the average Sunday School teachers should be in classes themselves, rather than attempting to teach others. This fact is a great drawback to the usefulness of the Sunday School of the present day.

Another important factor is the superintendent. Nearly all our churches seek a man for this place, but in my judgment it would be generally better if a woman should be selected. Of course, much will depend upon the material from which to select. In any case a woman should be selected for *assistant* superintendent. I am thoroughly satisfied that women, as a rule, make better teachers for the children in the Sunday School than men. For adult classes men may be better, but for the younger children, both as regards teachers and superintendents, women will usually do better work, and be more acceptable to the children themselves.

As respects these matters, the preacher cannot be too careful. Much of the responsibility of the Sunday School

ought to rest upon him. As a rule he ought not to teach a class, especially if the Sunday School is in the morning. Teaching before his preaching service is not a good preparation for the best work in the pulpit. A man should go into his pulpit fresh from his closet rather than from the Sunday School. If he works in the Sunday School, he will have his mind somewhat distracted with respect to his sermon, and he will often preach under a great disadvantage because of this distraction. However, if nothing else can be done to meet the case, the preacher must accept the responsibility of taking part in the Sunday School work. But this should never be done unless under the press of necessity.

However, the preacher should frequently visit the Sunday School; and occasionally he should make short talks to the children, but this should always be done without sacrificing much of the time assigned for class work. Even visitors should not be allowed to interfere with this work. Too much talk to the Sunday School is not healthy food, and the sensible superintendent will soon find that only occasionally can even short speeches from visitors be allowed.

With these preliminary observations, I may now, I think, make the following practical suggestions, so far as the preacher's work is concerned:

(1) The preacher should have a training class or classes for the education of teachers for work in the Sunday School. In many Sunday Schools there are already teachers' classes, and these are usually instructed by the pastors of these churches. This is very important, but this is not what I mean. The preacher should select from the church members such as he thinks would make teachers, but who have yet had no experience in teaching, and he should bring these together in such classes as are suitable for the

respective development of the members, and he should then train these classes for the special work of teaching in the Sunday School, just as pupils are trained in our normal schools for the work which they are expected to do. Just here is where our Sunday School work is weak. It makes no provision for the actual training of teachers before they enter upon their work. They are put to work at once without any training, and then stuffed with lesson leaves and cheap commentaries, until these members are supposed to be able to expound the Scriptures, at least to little children. But really these little children are the very ones that need the greatest care in teaching. Their tender minds are very susceptible, and when error is lodged in these minds it is difficult to eradicate it. I would always select the wisest and most competent teachers to take charge of the smaller children. The young men and young women may possibly take care of themselves, even though they have a teacher who is thoroughly incompetent to lead them.

Of course, this suggestion lays a heavy work upon a pastor, but he had better retrench upon his labours anywhere else rather than at the place I have indicated. But he need not always take this work upon himself. In many churches there are both men and women capable of relieving the pastor of this heavy work. Where this is the case it is better that these men and women should do the work, even for their own sake, as it will help them to grow as well as help the young prospective teachers.

(2) The preacher should see to it that the numerous nostrums which are substituted for Bible study should be eliminated from our Sunday Schools, especially where these are substituted for real Bible study. Lesson leaves and expositions of the Sunday School lessons may be used wisely and well, but there is in these supplies a constant

invitation to laziness and inadequate study of the lessons; and in all such cases the preacher should interpose and see to it that these helps, if used at all, shall be used legitimately. And any legitimate use cannot extend further than reference to these helps to supply information which is needed for the better understanding of the lesson. Such helps should never be used in the classes, either by pupil or teacher, while the lesson is being taught. These helps may be used in the preparation of the lesson, but should either be left at home or else discarded just as soon as the classes assemble. Only the Bible itself should be used during the hour of recitation, and this should be reverently studied with the constant assurance to the children that the Bible is really its own interpreter; or, in other words, that Scripture must be used in the interpretation of Scripture.

As matters now stand, the Bible itself, as a complete book, is very largely excluded from our Sunday Schools. This, in my judgment, is a fatal mistake. Detached and fragmentary portions of the Bible not only beget a false system of study, but by cutting up the Bible in the modern fashion the children come to have little or no reverence for these detached portions, and consequently there is little or no impression of a religious character made upon the young mind.

(3) A most excellent preliminary to teaching the classes is a meeting of all the teachers for special prayer. This meeting should be held, if possible, just before the Sunday School is opened, or while the superintendent is conducting the opening service. At this meeting it is well for the pastor to go over the lesson very briefly and indicate some of the most important points that ought to be emphasised in the classes, but not much time should be taken in this way, as the main object of the meeting is to prepare every

teacher's heart for the work that is to be accomplished. A teachers' meeting for the study of the lesson is no doubt important, where this can be secured, but I would rather have a teachers' meeting of only ten minutes, for special prayer, as a preparation for teaching, than hours where simply the study of the lesson is the main object. Of course both of these are important, and neither should be dispensed with, without some very good reason. At the same time if either must be omitted, let the study of the lesson take care of itself, and by all means have the meeting for special prayer. At this meeting every teacher ought to be encouraged to take a part, and this will help to create the habit of prayer with respect to the Sunday School work.

It is also important for the teacher to spend a moment in prayer with the class just before the lesson is taken up for consideration. If this is wisely done, it will generally have the effect to impress the class with a devotional spirit, and will almost always assure good order during the teaching period. In short, no one is fit for a Sunday School teacher who does not begin and end his work with prayer for guidance and blessing.

I think it will scarcely be denied that much of our present-day Sunday School work is not pervaded by any pronounced religious fervour. The whole thing is largely formal. Everything is done in a sort of hustling way, as if the main object is to get through as soon as possible. Now this hustling has many drawbacks, and one of these is to create an irreverent spirit, or at any rate a purely secular spirit; instead of this constant hustling or rush to accomplish a great deal in a very short time, let everything be done deliberately and reverently. It would be far better if a few minutes, in every session of the school, could be devoted to silent meditation and prayer. This habit would do much to beget order and reverence; and

both of these are greatly needed in most of our Sunday Schools. Indeed, reverence is gradually losing a place in our American civilisation. I am disposed to believe that some of the disorder and irreverence in our churches has its origin in our Sunday Schools. The free and easy style of the children and teachers is carried into the church audience room, and often this room becomes a sort of conversation hall, before the service begins, and this is sometimes so decidedly the case that the preacher, when he ascends the pulpit, should have a gavel with which to command silence. I do not wish to be hypercritical, but I am sure that all this irreverence is not conducive to spiritual culture; and as I believe much of it is imported from the Sunday School, I am anxious that the preacher of the twentieth century shall seek to cultivate in his Sunday School a distinctly reverent spirit.

No doubt a considerable amount of this irreverence comes from both the words and music which are now used nearly everywhere in our Sunday Schools. The words are often not only irreverent, but extremely silly, and not unfrequently teach what is practically false. But if the words are bad, the music is still worse. This is sometimes imported from the music halls and theatres, with only slight variations, and the consequence is the children cultivate a musical taste which soon becomes really vicious, and stands as a constant barrier in the way of reverent and spiritual singing, when these children pass from the Sunday School into the church. They demand the same kind of music in the church that they have had in the Sunday School. As the twig is bent so the tree is inclined. They have formed a taste on a low plane, and it is difficult for them to reach a higher plane, even after they have become men and women.

I do not wish to be unreasonable in this respect. It has

often been said that children are children, and they must be treated as children. In an important sense this is true, and consequently I would not advocate the introduction of a style of music suitable for a funeral in our Sunday Schools. Indeed, such a style of music would not be suitable for our churches except on funeral occasions. I believe in a church music that is adapted to the occasion. Sometimes this music should be very lively; at other times it should be very solemn. There is need for much variety in our church services, and consequently one style of music would not be appropriate at all times. Nevertheless no style of music should be allowed that cultivates irreverence; and what is true of the church is equally true of the Sunday School. Many of our song books used in the Sunday Schools are unworthy of the place they occupy, and are largely responsible for the irreverent spirit which often manifests itself in our church services, as well as in the Sunday School. But whatever may be the cause of the irreverence, to which attention has been called, undoubtedly this cause should be removed, if it is possible to do so. If much of it is found in the character of the songs and music used in our Sunday Schools, then there ought to be such a reformation inaugurated at once as will compel a radical change with respect to the matter of both the words and music. Reverence is fundamental in all true worship, and anything that destroys this reverence, or even fails to cultivate it, may be regarded as of doubtful tendency in either the Sunday School or church. I therefore plead for a new departure with respect to the songs and music which are specially intended for our Sunday School services.

XXXII

PROBLEM OF HOME TRAINING

This is a delicate subject for the preacher to handle, but he must handle it if he does his whole duty to his people. However, there ought to be no objection to advice with respect to this matter, as parents are instructed in the Scriptures to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Surely a command of this sort ought to be earnestly enforced, and at least it ought to be emphasised very strongly where it is needed, as it is just as binding as any other command in the New Testament. The delicacy of the subject arises from the unwillingness of many Christians to receive any admonition, however kind, as regards the rearing of their children. Many parents regard the training of their children as exclusively their own business, and consequently they are not willing to regard with favour any outside suggestions.

Now it is possible to make instruction in this matter offensive to those for whom it is intended; but this ought not to be so, and will not be so where the preacher confines himself to his legitimate duty. But, however this may be, the instruction suggested is very much needed, and no preacher can afford to omit it, since the very life of his church will often depend upon it.

Home is the fountain which supplies all the streams which make up our civilisation, and it is the fountain whence our churches receive much of the influence which makes them what they are. If the training of children, in the home circle, is neglected, this will soon be seen in the

Sunday School, and will also appear as an important factor in the church life.

Possibly the most serious defect in our American development is the abnormal and unworthy life in many of our homes. Certainly too much stringency in the execution of law should be avoided in the rearing of children, but the notion that these children can be developed as they should be without some restrictions upon evil tendencies ought to be at once vigorously excluded as a factor from every home circle.

The modern tendency, with respect to family life, is to indulge children rather than restrain them. Our Divine Lord teaches that the first step in the direction of following Him is self-denial, but our fathers and mothers are much inclined, in these piping days of freedom, to gratify almost every desire of their children rather than deny them anything. In short, they are taught practically self-gratification, as the chief thing of life, rather than self-abnegation.

Now all this is essentially wrong. It is not only contrary to the Scriptures, but it is wholly contrary to the best interests of children. It is a rare child, indeed, that does not need the lesson of self-denial; but this lesson cannot often be enforced without a categorical imperative, whether that be the one insisted upon by the celebrated Immanuel Kant, or the one, of even greater authority, found in the New Testament.

It is one of the sad features of our American development of manhood and womanhood that much of the early training is without any very distinctly healthful home influence. As a matter of fact, if things continue to go in the way they are now going, it will not be very long until the home circle will lose its boundary lines in the generalisation of what is called society. Already in our cities, towns, and villages most of the houses are without any

separating lines, but form a sort of common property in which the neighbours' children come and go without any restraint whatever, frequently not being required to even knock at the doors for admission, but to enter unceremoniously in any house within the square where their own home is located. All fences are removed, and a common campus is provided practically for every one alike.

This is all very beautiful as an ideal. It will do finely when the millennium has fairly dawned; but at present there is a little too much of the old Adam in most children for this plan to work to the best advantage in the development of individual character. In England every man's house is his castle, and no outside interference is allowed. When I lived there no public telephone was allowed in any English house. Many had private telephones connecting their office and home, but no Englishman would allow a public talking machine (to use his own description of the telephone) in his private residence. This may seem to Americans a very foolish prejudice, whose private residences are often anything else than their castles. But, after all, it must be admitted that there is a considerable amount of danger in these family telephones, where they connect with all sorts of people. We are sometimes very careful about the kind of associations our children form, and we not unfrequently warn them against talking to unworthy people. But these telephones give them opportunity, and apparently excuse them for talking to any kind of people who may call them up; and it may be affirmed with emphasis that sometimes they are spoken to in a manner which would never be the case if the speaker was looking in the face of the person addressed. This is especially true of some of the conversation which takes place between young men and young women. A young man will often say things through a telephone to a young lady that he

would not think of saying when she is looking at him face to face. It is distance that lends enchantment to the ear, and it is this fact that half apologises to the young man for his impudent speech.

However, I suppose the telephone has come to stay in our American homes. What then must be done about it? Undoubtedly it should be placed under control, just as everything else should be placed under control, so that it will not become an instrument of evil instead of an instrument of good. Children should not be allowed to talk indiscriminately through the telephone, any more than to talk indiscriminately face to face with people. There should be a careful guard over all association of this kind, for there is more danger in it than there is in even letter writing, and yet many parents are very careful about the people with whom their children correspond.

All this must receive the attention of the wise preacher if he expects to cultivate in his community a healthful life in the homes of his people.

But how shall the preacher deal with these somewhat delicate questions? It is difficult to give specific instructions so as to meet every case, but something in a general way may be suggested that will perhaps be helpful in most cases.

(1) Let the preacher deliver addresses both to parents and the young men and women of his church and community. In these public addresses he can say some things that he would hesitate to say if he were applying them to an individual case in private. Several of these special addresses ought to be delivered every year while in all the sermons preached throughout the year, the ethical conditions involved in the development of a true home life should be emphasised very strongly.

(2) Occasionally special talks to the young people at

exclusively young people's meetings will be very helpful in creating an atmosphere among the young that will largely contribute to the home life which is desirable. Generally these young people are easily impressed, and will be grateful to a faithful pastor who may speak earnest words to them with respect to a true life. I have usually found young people even anxious to be good rather than to be bad. Many of them are constantly engaged in a severe struggle to keep themselves in the line of a worthy Christian life. They will, for the most part, try to take the advice of a preacher who will administer his admonitions in the right spirit. But it is useless for him to denounce in the pulpit or anywhere else certain habits of the young unless he does it in the right spirit, and at the same time suggests a more excellent way. If the pastor will put these young people to work in the Master's vineyard, and inspire them with the nobility of this work, as compared with the worthless things on which they frequently spend their time and strength, it will generally not be long until these young people will be practically free from any temptation to go astray in following the world, the flesh, and the devil.

(3) In all this matter the preacher will find the main difficulty is with the parents. He will also find that frequently a private interview with these parents, with respect to their children, will be necessary in order to meet the case. Sometimes even a private interview will not succeed. However, it is always worth a trial, and if kindly undertaken it will do no harm even if it does no good. Undoubtedly the preacher must meet the responsibility in some way, for one badly governed family will often inoculate a whole neighbourhood with unruly children and evil conditions that are sure to result in a hindrance to the development of any worthy Christian life, if the final result does

not come to a complete disaster in all that relates to the best life of the whole community.

Parents in some way or other must be made to realise the importance of bringing up their children in the way they should go, so that when they are old they will not depart from that way. This is the wisdom of Solomon, and it has never been improved upon since his day. It is just as true now as it was when it was first spoken, and consequently the preacher should emphasise the fact that he will hold parents responsible largely for either the good or evil in the life of their children. When this is done everywhere, when the preacher cannot rest under his responsibility until he has faithfully dealt with this question in all of its relations, then, and not until then, will there be hope that the future of our American home life will distinctly and emphatically contribute to the best interests of our church life, and through the church to the best interests of our whole civilisation.

It may be well for a moment to consider the relation of home training to the Sunday School. Is it not true to a large extent that many parents feel no special responsibility for training their children at home in religious matters, simply because they expect them to receive this training in the Sunday School? I do not wish to be misunderstood at this point; and yet truth compels me to say that the modern Sunday School idea is making it easy for parents to neglect the religious training of their children at home. This ought not to be so, but that it is so, will not be questioned by any one who has thought seriously upon the matter. When the Sunday School was first inaugurated it was intended to gather up those children who had no homes, or whose home life gave no promise of religious instruction. This was a noble conception, and

it at once became popular with those who saw the need of reaching the class for whom the Sunday School was intended. But our modern Sunday School embraces the children in the homes of all the members of the church, and the consequence is that instead of the Christian parents of these children instructing them in the Bible at home, they are sent off to the Sunday School to receive this instruction, and often they are put into classes where the teachers themselves have really no knowledge whatever of the Bible, and are therefore wholly incompetent to teach these children in any way that will contribute to their spiritual development.

As a matter of fact it is lamentably true that only a comparatively few religious families have even family worship, and in case where this worship is a regular thing, it is often conducted in a way which is of little help to the children, even if it is to the adults who are present. I know of nothing more important in the development of a true religious life in a community than a wise, reverent, and informative family worship. Such a worship should include not only the reading of the Scriptures, in which all the children should participate, but should also include a plain, practical exposition of the Scriptures, especially as relates to conduct; so that the children may have a practical lesson each day from the Word of God to guide them in all their relations to other people. Such a service can be made not only very helpful, but also very interesting to the children themselves, if parents will only take the trouble to prepare for such a service. Nor will the whole benefit be with the children. The parents themselves will receive from such a service a most helpful stimulus for their own spiritual life. Furthermore, such a home training will greatly facilitate the best interests of

our Sunday Schools, for both parent and child will then be somewhat prepared to participate in a coöperative service in the study of the Word of God, such as the Sunday School very efficiently provides. But until this home training has received proper attention, it will be impossible to make our Sunday Schools what they ought to be.

XXXIII

THE PROBLEM OF SOCIETIES IN THE CHURCH

The multiplication of societies in the church is a marked feature of twentieth century Christianity. The man who heard, in the announcements from a certain pulpit, eleven society meetings for the week, was perhaps justified in asking where the church was in that community. Undoubtedly, in some communities, at least, the societies of the church occupy the chief place, while the church itself is very much in the background. The fact that these societies are multiplying almost everywhere, instead of decreasing, suggests a problem which calls for very careful consideration, and it is one which the twentieth century minister will have to face, no matter where he may locate, for there is scarcely any place now where a church exists that these societies are not predominant features in the church life.

Now it is certainly not wise to denounce this tendency until the reason for it is carefully considered. This reason will generally be found in a sincere desire to help the church work. There may be cases where the leading motive is an unsanctified ambition on the part of some church members who wish to manage things in their own way, without much regard for the best interests of the church. But I believe that these cases, if they exist at all, are very exceptional. I think it can be safely stated that an overwhelming majority of such societies are formed for the purpose of meeting conditions in the church life which it is believed cannot be met in any other way. In many places church life becomes stereotyped. The officers of the church are, for the most part, selected from the

older men, and these are frequently out of sympathy with the young life that is growing up around them. The result is the young people will either cease attending the church altogether or else they must form a society where they can, in some degree, at least, find an opportunity for congenial association and useful, spiritual employment.

It is readily admitted that this effort of the young people to provide for their spiritual growth and enjoyment is not always productive of the best results. But it is unquestionably an honest effort to meet an imperative need, and it ought to be treated as such by the pastor and church where this effort is made.

No doubt the Young People's Christian Endeavour movement had its origin in some such need or supposed need as has been indicated. This movement has done a great deal of good, but it has not been entirely free from evils. In some places it has practically taken the place of the church, while in others it has absorbed nearly all the young element of the church, and has failed to bring this element into active support of the church itself. These, however, are exceptional cases, and should not be taken as fair representatives of the Christian Endeavour movement. I think it cannot be successfully denied that the movement as a whole has had a salutary influence upon the church life of the twentieth century; but all the same the movement needs to be carefully handled, or else in many places it will be of little use to the churches, if not practically a disadvantage to them.

There is another reason why societies multiply in the churches. Much of our modern church life is stereotyped. Even the services are cold and formal. There is scarcely an exception to this rule. Stereoperfunctity reigns everywhere. Many people get tired of this round and round system. They sigh for a change. Human nature cannot

stand a strain of this kind for any length of time. There must come an end to it, and consequently a movement is started in the church to organise a society where some things will be considered that the church as a whole regards with indifference. Usually this effort ends in the formation of a new society, and so the multiplication of societies goes on, almost *ad infinitum*.

Now it must be admitted that much of this tendency is an evil. Nor should it be encouraged unless it is impossible to bring the whole church into line with the things that ought to be accomplished by it. The church itself is the pillar and support of the truth. It is declared in the Scriptures to be the body of Christ, and it is, therefore, the only legitimate organisation through which the work of Christ can be accomplished on this earth. I know what will be said in reply to this. It will be said these church societies are not outside of the church, but in it, and are, therefore, simply parts of the church itself. To a certain extent this is undoubtedly true, but there is a sense in which these organisations may become rivals of the church, and it is precisely this danger to which I am calling attention. I am well aware of the fact that this is the day of organised effort in every enterprise and that, therefore, these organisations in the church must be regarded as helps rather than hindrances. But this statement begs the whole question. Even allowing that these organisations are started with the best intention, it does not follow that they are best for the church, nor is it certain that this is the best way to meet any difficulty that may arise in our church life. If the same enthusiasm which is expended in organising and carrying forward these separate organisations could be manifested in improving the church life as a whole, is it not probable that these separate organisations would not be needed at all? But however this may

be, it is evidently improper to multiply societies in the church for everything that needs to be done. The twentieth century preacher, when he learns how to use every member of his church wisely and well, will have no need for these numerous societies which just now seem to be so fashionable in nearly every community. When the church itself shall be used for the purpose of a vital and interesting public service, and helpful devotional exercise, and at the same time provides definite work for every member of the church to perform, under the direction of the church officers, there will then be no need for any of the societies that are now occupying such prominent places, to say nothing of the multiplication of these societies which has become so prominent a feature of twentieth century Christianity.

It may be said that my ideal church cannot be realised in the present day. Probably this is true. I am fearful that it is altogether too true. Nevertheless, it is worthy of an honest effort on the part of every twentieth century preacher to solve this problem of church life in a sane manner, and this, I believe, can be done only when the church itself is made the central and authoritative organisation for all Christian worship and work.

However, until the ideal is reached, it may be possible to use subordinate organisations within the church so that they will help to reach the ideal which is set in the New Testament Scriptures. But if such organisations are admitted at all, they should always be what they claim to be, subordinate, and should therefore be in subjection to the church, and under the control of the proper officers of the church. When this is not the case there is constant danger that these societies may become centres of disintegration instead of centres of unification and strength to the church.

Of course the preacher must be guided in such matters, as in all other things, first of all by his New Testament, and certainly by that sanctified common sense which is always an important factor in the management of the affairs of the church. No very hard and fast lines can be drawn with respect to these societies to which attention has been called. What may be good for one community may be an evil in another. Environment in this respect, like in every other matter, must be taken into account; and just here is where the preacher will need all of that sanctified common sense which is always and everywhere so important a factor in a successful ministry.

At the same time I cannot emphasise too strongly the importance of bringing the church up to that beautiful ideal described in the fourth chapter of Ephesians. In this ideal church "The whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Here we have a church described which is an organism rather than an organisation. It is presented under the figure of the human body, and is practically the same description as found in the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians. In both cases this body of Christ is self-edifying. It contains within itself every element necessary to successful development, under the great head of the church, viz., Jesus Christ our Divine Lord.

At present, however, this beautiful ideal church is perhaps not realised in any community in all its perfection, and until it is realised, it may be necessary to use societies in the church as crutches upon which the lame and impotent churches of the present day can be supported, and from this point of view a reasonable number of societies may be partially justified, but certainly none of these so-

cieties ought to exist if the churches themselves were what they ought to be.

Let us take a single illustration, and this will suffice to make my meaning clear. It has come to be fairly well understood that Free Masons, Odd Fellows, and like societies, which are outside of the church, are actually more efficient in taking care of their members than the church is. Now what would be the result if the church of Jesus Christ should everywhere be the first on the ground when there is need of help with respect to any of its members? Undoubtedly in such a case the influence of the church would be immeasurably increased. It is a sad fact that in most instances of this kind the church lags behind even the societies of the world, and often does not appear upon the scene at all in any helpful way.

Now this is certainly not according to the mind of Christ, and if the church, as a body, acting together, will not do the work that needs to be done, surely no one ought to object to any combination of members of the church who will do something of what the church itself, as a whole, ought to do in order to meet the very purposes for which it exists in the world.

XXXIV

THE PROBLEM OF CHURCH MUSIC

Is it paradoxical to say that the most inharmonious thing in church life is that which is supposed to be the most harmonious? It has almost passed into a proverb that the choir of a church is always a storm-centre from which proceeds a considerable amount of lightning, even if this should not be accompanied with volleys of thunder. These discords in the choir can scarcely be regarded as equivalent to the discords which occur in all well-composed music in order to relieve the monotony. The discords of a choir do not generally confine themselves to the choir alone. These discords are sure to get into the church, and very frequently, instead of relieving monotony, they create it throughout a whole community, because there is so much talk about what the choir says and does that very little else is heard, and especially is this the case where the church is located in a small town or village. In such a place the choir becomes a potent influence in giving tone to the social life, and this tone is usually controlled by the dominating note of discord.

Now this is no fancied picture of the modern choir; it is a faithful delineation of the real thing as it exists in many communities. It is only right to say that there are not a few exceptions to this general rule. In some places the choir is a blessing to the church, and an educator of the people generally. It helps to raise the standard of music in the community; it emphasises the importance of culture; it accentuates the value of musical training, and demon-

strates the power of the human voice to give expression to holy emotions and spiritual aspirations through the delightful service of song. But it may be said, without the fear of contradiction, that this is exceptional in the case of choirs. For the most part these choirs are anything but beneficial in the development of either piety or efficiency, if they are not altogether a real disadvantage to the best interests of the church. What, then, must be done? At least one of three things.

(1) A choir may be selected from the members of the church, with due respect to the religious character of each person who is invited to become a member of the choir. In no case is it either good policy or good religion to invite outside parties, or to hire outside help of any kind to sing in the church, or in any way to become responsible for the church music. The moment this is done, the whole matter of the church music becomes largely a mere professional performance; for usually the secular element will predominate in the choir and practically pervert the singing from a worshipful purpose to that of a purely musical entertainment. However, if all the members of the choir are members of the church, or at least members of some church, it is possible to use a choir for leading the music so as to promote rather than hinder devotional feeling. But this whole matter of the choir needs the most careful and prayerful attention of the pastor and the officers of the church. In no case must the matter be left without the superintendency of the official board, for the moment the choir is allowed to take its own course, without official direction from the church, that moment will it become a menace to the peace and harmony of the congregation, as well as an obstacle in the way of spiritual growth. Hence I cannot too strongly recommend that all members of a church choir shall be real Christians, and generally they

should be members of the church where they sing. Outside elements will almost invariably become centres of weakness, and these should be avoided if possible in the formation of a choir for the purpose of leading the service of song in public worship.

(2) A much better way than is usual in most churches is to select some of the best singers of the church and place them together, where they can have a controlling influence in leading the music. In this way they will be able to help the members of the congregation generally in singing the songs selected, and in time they will educate the people up to a better standard of church music. But both the organist and the singers should be Christians of undoubted character, for if they are not, the conspicuous place which they are invited to occupy will only emphasise any defects in the character which they are known to possess. Unworthy people in a choir will be just as readily reprobated by the church attendants as will be the case of an unworthy minister in the pulpit, though in the former case much less may be said about the matter than in the latter case. However, the public will always form its own estimate of people who are singing the Gospel, as well as in the case of those who are preaching the Gospel. When singers are using some of the most beautiful and sacred words of hymnody, while their lives are known to be a direct contradiction of the words they are singing, it is impossible to make such singing helpful to those who hear. A lie uttered in the choir is even worse, if possible, than a lie uttered in the pulpit. It is bad enough to tell a lie anywhere, but it seems to me it only adds to the iniquity of the thing when we set music to it and sing it.

(3) Perhaps the best way after all to provide for the singing that is needed in our churches is to employ a precentor who shall stand before the congregation and lead

the singing, either with or without an organ. This precentor may be either a man or a woman, but in either case the voice must be controlling, so that the whole congregation may be easily led. Occasionally in some instances a good cornet player may take the place of a precentor, if such a player can be found in the church. But no matter whether it be the human voice or instrument that leads, the whole congregation should be urged to take part in the song service; and when the songs and music are selected with a view to spiritual worship, rather than to exhibiting the musical talent of the singers, little difficulty need be experienced with the average congregation in producing a helpful public service.

But the selection of both the songs and the music is of great importance. Many of the songs now used in the public services of the churches are really unworthy of any place in church hymnody. Some of these songs are actually not much better than boastful expressions of a piety which has no place in the development of a religious character whose fundamental motive is supplied by that teaching of Christ which says, " He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Think of any humble, self-restraining soul singing in real earnestness that, when the saints are numbered in the everlasting Kingdom, he will certainly be there. All such songs ought to be at once expunged from our hymn books. Indeed, the church needs no greater service than that which would use the scissors vigorously with respect to a large number of hymns which have become canonised in our modern hymn books.

Much of the music which is used in our song service also needs to be remanded to the *Codex expurgatorius.* Doubtless our Sunday Schools are responsible for both the words and music of many songs that are now sung in the public worship of the churches. The children are taught to sing

what is called lively music, but which is really no music at all, but a sort of jingle with which the children keep time, and scream out something at intervals between the time beats, without making the first semblance of music for either the head or the heart. The whole thing is practically a burlesque on the very name of song, and certainly ought never to be transferred from the Sunday School into the church, even if allowed to remain in the former for at least a time. However, I do not believe that such music or songs, as are very generally used in our Sunday Schools, should have a place even there, to say nothing of a place in the churches. But whether this view of the matter be correct or not, so far as the Sunday School is concerned, it certainly is true and ought to be strongly emphasised, so far as the church is concerned. The crying need of our song service in the churches is a more dignified, earnest, and spiritual worship. We need to "sing with the spirit and with the understanding," and we certainly do not need to sing in the hop-skip-and-jump style of much of our modern church music. In many places the old chorals have gone into disuse, while the new style has practically usurped the place of all worshipful strains such as ring through every note of Old Dundee, Uxbridge, and Old Hundred.

But there is another side to this matter. If I were to attempt to indicate in a brief sentence what I believe to be the greatest hindrance to a real spiritual worship in the public services of the churches, I would say that it is the introduction into the worship of a song service which is chiefly controlled by a music standard rather than by a Scriptural standard. There are usually in every community a certain number of music experts, and these are wholly dissatisfied with any musical performance in the churches which does not in some degree at least satisfy their taste. Now it often happens that these music experts are not members

of the church at all, and even where they are members they are so dominated by their musical ideals that ordinary singing is almost painful to them, even if they can endure it at all. This fact at once creates a conflict between taste and worship, and this conflict often results in subordinating the worship in order to meet the standard of these experts and satisfy their music taste.

Now, this is the fatal rock on which many churches are practically wrecked. These musicians or cultivated singers are usually few in numbers when compared with the whole church; but the whole church is subordinated to the wishes of these music experts, and while the song service will now meet their requirements, it misses largely a majority of the people who are in attendance.

I am well aware as to what will be said in reply to all this. It will be said that a fine class of music in the church will be educational, and will do much to raise the standard of music in the church. This is no doubt true to a certain extent, and if a very high class of music is necessary in a church, undoubtedly some apology can be made for giving up the church music into the hands of those who are competent to teach the high-class music to be desired. But is such music, as is here indicated, really needed in our church services? I certainly do not advocate a low standard of church music in order to spiritual worship. I do not think it helps that worship when the music is mostly a discord. Nevertheless I am convinced that there is a happy medium which may take the place of both the extremes to which attention has been called. A difficult and classical style of music is not at all necessary in order to have a very high class of music. Simplicity in this respect is just as necessary in order to spiritual worship as the simplicity that is in Christ is necessary in order to make the world realise his true greatness. The truest

eloquence is always manifested through the simplest language, and the noblest music that has ever been sung in the churches is that which may be readily sung by the humblest followers of Christ. I am not, therefore, pleading for a song service which lacks dignity, because it violates every acknowledged rule of good singing, but I am pleading for a song service simple enough for every one to use, and at the same time not violate any of the important rules of music. I do not wish anything introduced into the churches that would represent Oliver Wendell Holmes' organ grinders, where he says:

> **You'd think they were crusaders sent,**
> **From some infernal clime,**
> **To pluck the eyes of sentiment,**
> **And dock the tale of rhyme,**
> **To crack the voice of melody,**
> **And break the legs of time.**

No doubt a considerable portion of the singing in our churches both "cracks the voice of melody" and "breaks the legs of time," but as bad as this is, it is not much worse than a mere musical performance which has no heart behind it, and which is purely a musical entertainment rather than a worshipful expression of the soul's deepest emotions with respect to spiritual things.

Looking at the matter from any point of view, it is evident that the preacher of the twentieth century will have his work cut out for him when he attempts to deal with the music problem of his church. Nevertheless, he must deal with it, if the song service is to be made helpful in developing the devotional life of his people, and the sooner he deals with it from the spiritual point of view, the better it will be for the success of his ministry.

XXXV

THE PROBLEM OF EVANGELISM

A CHURCH without the evangelistic spirit is practically a dead church. The first command in the great commission which Jesus gave to his Apostles is to "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." The Gospel message must be declared to the people if they are to be saved, for "the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." But the Gospel cannot be preached to the nations unless the evangelists go to these nations and carry the good news to them. But how can these evangelists go except they be sent? This is the Apostle Paul's final conclusion with respect to the important matter of evangelising the world; and this at once throws the responsibility back on the church as the organism through which this great work must be accomplished.

Every preacher should, therefore, make his church a centre of evangelistic fervour and power, sending out the Gospel message into every nook and corner of his parish, as well as supporting every effort to carry the good news to the uttermost parts of the earth. Nothing short of this high enthusiasm for souls will meet the responsibility of any church that claims to be a factor at all in the great work of converting the world to Christ.

But this very important work, this imperative work, calls for the greatest care in the selection of men to do it, as well as in the selection of methods by which it is to be accomplished. To do the work of an evangelist is to rise to the highest power of service, and no one can do this

work who has not special qualifications for it; and among these qualifications must be reckoned the wisdom which is from above, which is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." Parts of this general description should receive special emphasis, for no preacher of any kind needs this wisdom from above more than does the evangelist who practically stands between the dead and the living in seeking to save the lost. He should, therefore, have first of all a clear conception of what the message is he is to preach. There should be no confusion in his mind as to what the Gospel really is, and he should preach this Gospel with all the power he possesses, as well as rely upon that divine help which is promised to every faithful minister of the Gospel.

It may be said, I think, without the fear of contradiction, that the last twenty-five years have developed a new species of evangelism as compared with previous years in the history of the church. Perhaps no one is more responsible for this new development than the late D. L. Moody. Both in this country and in England, he and Mr. Sankey, in their day, led the forces of this new evangelism. It is therefore worth while to consider in what respects these men secured the marked success which attended their evangelistic services. Looking at the matter from simply the human side, I think it may be safely affirmed that their success depended upon at least the following facts:

(1) All of their arrangements were characterised by good business management. They never commenced work at a place until they had carefully surveyed the whole field and planned wisely with respect to organisation. They practically assumed that the Lord is always ready to do his part, and the only difficulty in the way of success is to be found on the human side, not on the divine side. Con-

sequently, they were careful to arrange everything in a businesslike manner before beginning their work, and then after beginning, they never lost sight of good business methods.

Now this is evidently a very important matter. There is a certain side of Christian work, and especially evangelistic work, which calls for the wisest and best arrangement of forces, and nothing will insure success more readily than careful attention to the matter of good business methods. Perhaps the old notion that somehow or other God will bless any kind of evangelistic work, no matter how imperfectly done, is one of the reasons why evangelistic work was not very successful prior to the time of the Moody and Sankey meetings.

(2) So far as the preaching was concerned, the success of Mr. Moody depended largely upon his appreciation of the real purpose of the Gospel. He evidently gave very little attention to the mere education of men. His whole purpose in preaching was to *save* men, to make them realise the need of a Saviour, and to point them to that Saviour as the source of all life and blessedness. He did not deal in "glittering generalities" about a "Christian civilisation," a "high culture," or a "scientific harmony of things." Nor did he for a moment trust a legal self-righteousness; but he thundered the anathemas of the law against all ungodliness, and then showed the only way of escape, viz., that by the blood of Jesus. This gave his preaching a pointed, present, and emphatic application and made every man feel that he was not only personally addressed, but that he was also personally responsible to lay hold of the offers of mercy which are so graciously proposed in the Gospel.

It is not wonderful at all that this direct preaching, in precisely the line of the purpose of the Gospel, produced

the very results which were found to follow Mr. Moody's ministry. The people for a long time had been entertained by tropes and figures; they had been stuffed with science and saturated with literature; they had been entertained with discourses on the "perfection of human nature," "the mighty progress of the race," and the "grandeur of our civilisation," and many had come to conclude that sin is a myth and unrighteousness only a slight irregularity which will be rectified by and by when, in the struggle of life, the doctrine of the survival of the fittest has been fully canonised in the popular faith. Mr. Moody's preaching smashed right through these vain conceits of half-informed sceptics and latitudinarian ministers, and, what is still worse, self-conscious hypocrites who had stolen the livery of Heaven in which to serve the devil.

(3) Another important element of success in Mr. Moody's preaching was the prominence he gave to Scripture reading. He was probably not a very safe exegete. He certainly had very little knowledge of the laws of hermeneutics. It is probable that some of his teaching was far from satisfactory when tested by the acknowledged canons of criticism. I think it quite likely his theology, if he had any, was not always in harmony with the high position which he gave to the Bible; nevertheless the people very generally forgot his crudities in the presence of his overtowering faith in God's eternal truth. It was not so much what was learned at his Bible meetings that was important, as that the meetings were actually held and the Word of God magnified as the lamp to our feet and the light to our pathway. In the vain speculations of a half-earnest pulpit, the importance of God's Word had been largely lost sight of, and with this degeneracy had come the corresponding weakness in spiritual life and activity which must always necessarily follow. Mr. Moody's effort was to cut loose from the

shallow nonsense with which the souls of men had been fed, and then to urge upon the people the importance of receiving the "unadulterated milk of the Word" that they might grow thereby. With him there was no higher appeal than the plain teachings of the Bible, and whether he was always consistent with this faith or not, he made the impression upon the people at any rate that the Word of God is the only source of authority in religious matters. This at once gave dignity, warmth, and power to all his utterances, and made his preaching, which otherwise would have been commonplace indeed, almost irresistible before the vast audiences he addressed. In fact so prominent a feature was this in his ministry that his style was dogmatical to excess, and would scarcely have been endured had it not been for the abundant evidence he gave of the sincerity and the unselfishness with which he laboured. But even these considerations would not have redeemed his style from just criticism, had he not constantly assumed to speak only as the oracles of God.

In this respect he furnished a lesson to the preacher of the twentieth century. Undoubtedly the modern pulpit would be greatly benefited by substituting the Word of God for the thin sentimentalisms and the stupid platitudes about the beauties of science, and the glories of human achievement which furnish the staple of so much preaching in these days. The people have been fed upon this insipid stuff until almost any other thing is relished by them; but when they are called to the earnest pleadings of God's Word, to its solemn sanctions of right and fearful denunciations of wrong, it is not strange that a great awakening is almost sure to follow and that many will cry out "What must we do to be saved?" In view of these facts ought we not more and more to believe in that Scripture which says, "He that hath my Word, let him speak my Word

faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord."

(4) Another important element of Mr. Moody's success will be found in the fact that he fixed for the sinner with definite certainty the *time when* he would be accepted of God. This had been a grave fault with many of the old methods among revivalists. The old style was to bring the sinner to the mourners' bench and then labour with him from time to time, until he himself was satisfied that he had "gotten through," to use the phraseology adopted by the workers in such meetings. This often left the sinner in constant doubt as to his actual situation. He realised that he was a sinner; he knew he wanted to be saved; he was quite well satisfied that Jesus is the Saviour of sinners; but somehow or other he could not fix the time when he was certainly accepted. He was told to consult his feelings; but he found these variable and wholly unreliable in a matter of so much importance. Hence he was left as a sort of pendulum swinging between his hopes and his fears, now on one side, and now on the other, until after becoming weary of the struggle, he turned away from the whole thing in disgust, and often became a confirmed infidel.

Mr. Moody preached that the sinner may have rest *immediately;* that there need be no agonising about the matter; that the sinner's salvation is already secured, and all that is necessary on his part is to reach forth his hand and appropriate it. He need give little or no attention to feeling; his own subjective state has nothing to do with his acceptance, if only his faith in Christ is firmly fixed; for the moment he trusts in Jesus, that moment is he assured that his sins are pardoned and his name written in the Lamb's book of life.

Now the theology and soteriology of this view of the matter may not be entirely satisfactory to one who under-

stands the whole plan of salvation and the government of God; but it was a great improvement upon the old way of treating the sinner by making him believe that he could, by a sort of lengthened penance at the mourners' bench, or in some other way, propitiate God, and thereby secure pardon simply on the ground that God will, after a while, be merciful to the sinner, if the sinner will only patiently wait God's good time and pleasure.

(5) No doubt the singing of Mr. Sankey had considerable influence in giving popularity, and even contributed a certain amount of power, to Mr. Moody's meetings. This was especially the case with these meetings in England. The Sankey singing was practically a new departure as regards the service of song in evangelistic work. It had a certain amount of novelty in it, and was, therefore, attractive simply because it was outside of the ordinary course of things.

His method has been followed by nearly all modern evangelists, and consequently the singing of solos, quartettes, and lively hymns, set to music of easy comprehension, may now be regarded as a sure accompaniment of all evangelistic efforts under the direction of what are known as popular evangelists.

As I have already spoken freely with respect to the use of hymnody in public religious services, I need say nothing more now than to point out the fact that while these popular hymns and somewhat trivial music may have a sort of present attractiveness, and even influence for good upon the great audiences usually assembled in evangelistic services, at the same time it ought to be stated with emphasis that the final effect of such singing is very generally for evil rather than good. It is like trying to build up the system with an attractive food which is relished by the appetite but gives little or no strength, and unfits the sys-

tem and taste to receive that which is actually nourishing. It is like literature of the sensational kind, which, while it pleases for the moment, never fails to vitiate the taste for that which is helpful in developing a normal intellectual growth.

(6) After all, it may be said that the success of Mr. Moody's meetings, as well as the meetings of other modern evangelists, may be traced to the coöperation of the various evangelical churches. Nothing emphasises the importance of the federation of the churches more than the value of coöperation in evangelistic work. Without such coöperation Mr. Moody's work would have been a failure. It is equally true of all modern evangelists. When these evangelists are working specially for certain denominational churches, the coöperation of these churches is absolutely essential to any worthy success. Indeed, as the union of God's people is absolutely necessary in order that the world may believe that Jesus is sent of the Father, it would seem that in the providence of God, revival meetings, such as were held by Mr. Moody and evangelists that have followed him, are intended to be practical illustrations of the power of coöperation in converting the world to Christ; and in this respect the evangelism of the present day is worth all it costs, though in some respects it needs to be very vigorously reformed before it can accomplish the work which must be done in order that the whole world may be saved by the Gospel.

(7) It will scarcely be denied that these revival meetings reach some people who would perhaps never be touched by the regular minister of a place. Indeed, this is, or ought to be, the main purpose of evangelistic work. It is to reach the unsaved who are either locally outside of the opportunities of the pastor or who are not easily influenced by him. There is no doubt about the fact that Mr. Moody's

meetings in England accomplished a good work in this respect. The conversion of such a man as Professor Drummond was worth all the Moody meetings cost, if nothing else had been done, as it is highly probable that Professor Drummond would not have been converted at all through the ordinary church services with which he was familiar.

It is also true that in many places even in church communities, churches may be found where there is no regular pastor at all; and in such places wise evangelistic services may revive the cause and even prepare the way for the location and permanent usefulness of a regular preacher. But, after all, it must be understood that purely evangelistic services should usually be planned with a view to reaching communities that have no regular pastors, for this is undoubtedly the Scriptural idea of the travelling evangelist, though the evangelist of the New Testament performed certain official duties, such as setting the churches in order, that are not recognised at present as duties at all belonging to his office.

Having now noticed briefly some of the advantages of modern evangelism, I will conclude what I have to say on the subject by indicating some evils attending evangelistic meetings and also some improvements that ought to be made in order that revival meetings may reach their highest usefulness in modern religious work.

(1) The whole Gospel must be preached. Most evangelists deal faithfully with the subject of sin. They preach that men are sinners and therefore cannot be saved without the pardoning mercy of God. They also preach that Jesus is the Saviour of sinners, and that it is only through Him that the sinner can secure the pardon of his sins. But they generally fail to tell the sinner in biblical style just how he is to receive remission of sins. After convincing him that he is a sinner and that Jesus is his Saviour, they

then tell him that the moment he believes in the Saviour that moment does he receive the pardon of all his past sins. But the sinner often does believe in Jesus, fully realises that he does believe in him, and yet somehow or other he thinks that his sins are not yet pardoned. Now the Gospel method is much better when the whole of the Gospel is preached. It is undoubtedly right to preach that men are sinners and that Jesus is the only Saviour of sinners, but it is also most important to tell these sinners just how their Saviour saves them. This the Apostles of Jesus Christ never failed to do, and yet the exact language of the Apostles is nearly always suppressed by many modern evangelists, and consequently the apostolic method of giving assurance to the sinner, as regards both time and place with respect to his salvation, has practically lost its efficiency, by leaving out some of the conditions of the Gospel where they are expressed in the New Testament. In this way one of the strongest features in apostolic evangelism is practically completely ignored in much of the evangelism of the present day.

(2) But a still more objectionable feature, if possible, of modern evangelism, is the use which is made of prayer. Now I do not wish to be misunderstood at this point. I have the very greatest confidence in the power and efficacy of prayer. No one can emphasise too decidedly the importance of prayer as a means of Christian growth, and as a help in all our work for God. Nevertheless, we cannot give our assent to such a perversion of prayer as is all too evident in modern revivalism. But I have less respect for this perversion of prayer as I find it under the administration of Mr. Moody, because much of Mr. Moody's preaching was in direct antagonism to his theory of conversion. He preached a present salvation. He preached that the sinner is responsible to God for the manner in which he treats

the Word spoken. He preached that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, and relied upon the cross as that by which the world is to be crucified to the sinner, and the sinner to the world. And yet, he turned away from this plain, Scriptural teaching to the very foolish fancy that the sinner can do nothing, after all, until God shall, in some mysterious way, by special interposition, lead him to a knowledge of Christ. Hence prayer was substituted for obedience; the Throne of Grace was called into requisition to take the place of definite action on the part of the sinner. Thus the Gospel plan was perverted, and the sinner at last left to the unscriptural doctrine that God will save him simply in answer to prayer.

But this doctrine has an almost ludicrous side. It leads to excesses which become ridiculous, even in the eyes of those who practise them. Think of having two or three hundred requests for prayers, and reading them to a large audience from slips of paper, and then some one to bear these requests before the Throne of Grace! Think of this as a serious matter in the light of Scriptural teaching, and who does not see at once that it is an entire perversion of one of the most important privileges vouchsafed to the Christian? I do not say that we may not carry the requests of our friends upon our prayers to God, but what I do say is, that we cannot do this in a public manner, and in the businesslike style with which it is done in revival meetings, without destroying all seriousness in reference to the whole matter.

Furthermore, this method is misleading, and is therefore constantly making infidels. It might be sufficient to say it is well known that many of these requests are not answered, and therefore the effect on the mind is that the promises of God have failed. But the real truth is, there are no such promises as are here relied upon. Passages of

Scripture relating to the efficacy of prayer are quoted to support this method, but these are as clearly misapplied as that the method grows out of a false view of the divine government. But I will not insist upon this point.

It misleads in calling the sinner's attention to the wrong thing. He should be pointed to Christ, he should be exhorted to trust in him; and when he exercises this trust, he should immediately obey him. But, instead of this, he is told to trust in Christ, that this is all-sufficient; and in order that he may trust in Him with a saving faith, prayers are offered on his behalf. Then, in answer to these prayers, the sinner is made to realise that he is accepted of God. Now, all this is not only unscriptural, but is positively a perversion of the Gospel plan of salvation, and it is because this is so that I enter my solemn protest against the whole proceeding.

But I may be asked, Shall we not pray for sinners, and may they not even pray for themselves? I answer, unhesitatingly, Yes. Both of these may be done, and yet save the Gospel from the shame to which it is exposed by modern revivalism. The church should pray for the world, but certainly not when they are refusing to do what the Gospel plainly commands them to do. God is a God of order, and not of confusion. He has appointed specific means for specific ends. To illustrate: In the natural world, He has appointed light as a medium of sight, and nothing else can take its place. He has appointed water to quench thirst, air for the lungs, and food for the body; and these cannot be dispensed with, or other things substituted, without serious consequences. Shall we say that He is less orderly in his moral government? Must we accord to Him the highest intelligence in physical things, in arranging the symmetry, adaptation, and harmony of all things in nature, but when we come to the kingdom of grace, believe that he

has left everything in confusion? Can we in truth think that our Heavenly Father could possibly act in this way? As a fact, we know that He does not act in this way. He has ordained the Gospel as his power to the salvation of men; this must be preached faithfully as his means to turn men from darkness to light, and nothing else can be substituted for it. Furthermore, this Gospel has specific conditions, which must be accepted; and nothing else can be substituted for these without perverting the whole Gospel plan. Prayer, specifically, belongs to the Christian, is an institution of the church, and is a means to help the Christian in his struggles to overcome. But modern revivalism has put prayer out into the world, which is an entire perversion of Heaven's order.

(3) Another objectionable feature is what may be appropriately called the overdoing of the human element in the matter of influence. The evangelist himself is often not far removed from a hypnotist. I do not say that he is conscious of this. I certainly do not wish to be understood as charging him with an attempt at using an unworthy influence. He may be thoroughly conscientious, and he may have a gift which helps to fit him for his work, provided this gift is wisely used. But it cannot be denied that much of our evangelism of the present day comes dangerously near to the methods of the hypnotists when it escapes that of the auctioneering system, which is another phase to be carefully avoided. Undoubtedly it is the duty of the evangelist as well as the church to labour earnestly for the conversion of souls. But when this labour is expended in a sort of persuasion, which is intended simply to increase the number of converts rather than to make real Christians, it is certainly time to enter a solemn protest against that which lends itself to this perversion of the Gospel of Christ. Much of the coldness, indifference, and

even scepticism which may be found in almost any of the churches is due largely to false methods of evangelism; for many of those whose names are now recorded upon the church registers have never been born from above. They have come into the churches through the whirlwind, the fire, or the earthquake, but have never heard the still small voice of God in the simple but effective story of the Gospel, in all of its facts, commands, and promises, as may be by those who have been properly taught and normally brought into contact with the saving power of the cross.

Hence, I conclude, while there are many good things in modern revivalism, it is, upon the whole, as it is frequently conducted, in the way of the progress of the Gospel of Christ. True, it stands as a solemn protest against the formality, the coldness, and the worldly-mindedness of modern Protestantism. It is an effort of earnest men to break over the dead point in the progress of the religion of Christ. But it carries with it a fatal poison; it inoculates Christian activity with a most serious error, practically setting aside the Gospel in some particulars, and, through an ostentatious parade of prayer, seeks to effect the conversion of men by direct interposition of divine power; thus denying the freedom of the will, and practically making God responsible for the present rebellious state of the world. From this doctrine I turn away in disgust, and though I sympathise with the purpose which these earnest men have in view, I cannot allow that their work, as a whole, is such as the age needs and such as God approbates.

(4) On of the most objectionable features in modern evangelism is the aftermath. Often the reaction from the abnormal excitement which attends a successful evangelistic crusade, is anything but helpful. The usual services seem tame after the evangelist has left. He has

worked up everything to a white heat, and consequently when the regular services of the church are again inaugurated there is often a feeling in the community that the religious temperature has practically gone down to zero. This ought not to be the case, and need not be the case, if the evangelistic services are conducted with a view to permanent results rather than immediate results.

The pastor must guide in this matter. He must watch carefully the course of things, and utterly refuse to have his pulpit subsidised for the mere purpose of securing numbers rather than real conversions. I think it will be readily admitted that a large number of evangelistic meetings leave the churches where they are held in a worse condition than they were before the meetings began. It often happens that half of the converts made at these meetings cannot be found, or at least do not attend the meetings of the church, six months after the evangelistic services close. This is so much the case that it has come to be the fashion to anticipate precisely this result, and consequently not a few pastors and churches are beginning to regard such services as an evil rather than a good. But when the services are held with due respect to permanent results rather than temporary results, and when the auctioneer system is completely ignored, and when the Gospel is faithfully preached, such services ought to be helpful in almost any community, and consequently I plead for a reformation in evangelistic work rather than a disposition to discount it, as is now frequently done.

(5) Another evil must be watched carefully. In some communities where evangelistic services are fashionable the people look for them as a sort of periodical blessing; and where this is the case, very few people will obey the Gospel at the regular meetings of the church. The people wait for these extraordinary services, and it often happens

that a number of people will respond immediately after the services begin, simply because they have been waiting for the time to arrive when their obedience to the Gospel may be manifested. It is well, therefore, in such communities to break up the regularity or periodicity of these meetings, for there is nothing that will keep up the healthful pulse of a church better than frequent additions during the regular Lord's Day services.

(6) Evangelistic services in a church that is supplied with a pastor will often weaken the pastor's influence by creating an abnormal excitement, so as to make his preaching appear dull and uninteresting, when it follows these highly wrought services. Sometimes a successful protracted meeting in a church is practically the beginning of the end of a pastor's influence. Indeed, it not unfrequently happens that he will soon have to find another location, as his preaching no longer interests as it once did.

Of course this is not a necessary result, but that it is a result in many cases will not seriously be denied by any one who is at all competent to judge.

(7) These evangelistic meetings, in the modern style, have a tendency to emphasise a sort of statistical Christianity rather than the real thing. The evangelist must secure additions in some way, whether these are genuinely converted or not. I do not say that he means to build the foundation on wood, hay, or stubble. I think that generally he has persuaded himself that his methods are perfectly legitimate, and that the main thing is to secure the decision of those who hear him, whether that decision has been gained by legitimate means or not. For the time being, he seems to lose sight of the means he is using and looks only to the end, viz., the mathematical feature which is so important in making up a report for the newspapers.

I am fully persuaded that a large majority of our

popular evangelists are not at all conscious of the evil they are doing through the mechanical machinery which they use and the energy which they put forth to secure numbers of converts rather than converts, whether few or many, who have been born from above, and who, consequently, come into the churches somewhat prepared for the spiritual conflict which they will there have to wage. The faithful pastor will soon see that ten real conversions will be worth more to his church than five hundred who simply come in through an abnormal excitement and through an auctioneering system which comes dangerously near a profanation of the Gospel.

Having now presented both sides of this great problem, I need say but a word or two in conclusion. The twentieth century preacher will be compelled to deal with this important problem. It will come up again and again in his ministry. In my own judgment, the best disposition to make of it is for the pastor himself to do a considerable amount of evangelistic preaching, and, speaking broadly, he should hold his own evangelistic services whenever it is possible for him to do so. He is none the less an evangelist because he is a pastor, and if he can get his church members to coöperate with him as earnestly as they usually coöperate with a visiting evangelist, he will have little or no difficulty in holding such services as are needed with his home forces; and in nineteen cases in twenty these meetings will be vastly more beneficial to his church than any meetings that may be held by professional evangelists who use the methods to which attention has already been called, and which are undoubtedly very objectionable in many cases. Let the pastor train his people to go everywhere preaching the Word, and let him keep his pulpit full of the evangelistic spirit at all his regular services, and it will

not be long until the professional evangelist will have to confine his services to the general field where no churches exist, or he will have to go to foreign lands and preach the Gospel to the heathen. Such a solution of the evangelistic problem would probably hasten the millennium by very many years.

XXXVI

THE PROBLEM OF THE PREACHER FOR THE PRESENT AGE, AND HOW HE IS TO BE SUPPLIED

THE kind of preacher needed for the present age has already been partially sketched in considering some of the problems in preceding chapters. However, there is still some things to be said in order that we may have a full-drawn picture of the man who is to fill the important place of preacher in the coming days. The following special characteristics I think must be included in any exhaustive treatment of the twentieth century preacher.

(1) He must be educated, but *not educated overmuch.* I have already intimated that the age demands a collegiate education for any man who hopes to make the ministry of the Gospel successful in the highest degree. It is not meant, however, by this that no one can preach the Gospel effectively unless he has a collegiate education. But it is meant that, all other things being equal, a collegiate education is invaluable in equipping the preacher for his best work.

But there is one thing I would guard well at this point; the educated preacher must be careful not to swing his academic diploma in the air, or hang it upon the pulpit for the inspection of his audience, every time he comes before the people. He ought to be scholarly in what he says, but he need not be academic. Indeed he must not be pretentious in his scholarship at all, or else he will soon find his greater usefulness at an end. Education ought to

help to simplicity, and when it does not do this it is a positive disadvantage rather than a help in ministerial work. If it be true that "beauty unadorned is adorned the most," it is equally true that an education that conceals the academy and shows only the results of academical training is the best kind of education, and indeed the only kind that will adorn the preacher of the twentieth century. All pretence is reprehensible, and usually the man who aims to exhibit his scholarship is a pretender, and really has little or no scholarship to exhibit. But even when his scholarship is respectable it is not respectable to put his scholarship on parade for the sake of convincing the people how much his little head contains. Goldsmith's "Village Schoolmaster" was a saint in comparison with the modern preacher who writes on his hat the college where he was educated and lisps through his voice the very intonation of his professors of whom he is simply an imitator.

Consequently, while I plead for a highly educated ministry, at the same time I hold strongly to the conviction that any sensible man will have his modesty increased and his egotism decreased in the precise ratio of his advancement towards high educational attainments.

(2) The twentieth century preacher must have convictions. I mean by this that he cannot make his ministry a permanent success unless he believes in what he preaches. Faith in his message is absolutely essential in order to make that message a power in the salvation of the world. It is probable that a lie heartily believed in and earnestly advocated will produce more immediate results than will the truth half believed in and advocated with a doubting hesitancy, a trembling uncertainty, and a half-hearted conviction. Professional ministers of the Gospel are no longer a possibility in the new century, if permanent success is

to be seriously considered. Of course even hypocrites and charlatans, when they have special gifts for controlling audiences, may have a temporary following; but these men will never last long in any one place, and their work, built of wood, hay, and stubble, will not stand the fire when the day of trial comes. Only the men of deep and earnest conviction will produce that which will be a permanent good in the coming age.

(3) The successful preacher of the twentieth century must not only have convictions, but he must have the courage of these. It is very suggestive that in the Apostle Peter's pyramid of character he places courage next to faith. We must add to our faith courage, and it is certainly true that no preacher in the present age can make his ministry a real success without this important element as a factor in his ministerial work. As an element of popularity courage is valuable. There is nothing that people will applaud more readily than a courageous man; and there has never been any age of the world when the courage of honest conviction was more appreciated than at the present time. Just now great moral questions are moving the masses. The past few years have been full of history, and the new age invites to the fullest play of honest convictions.

However, it is well to guard against mistaking rashness for courage. The really courageous man who wishes to give his convictions to the world will be extremely careful how he does this. He will have much respect for time, place, and circumstance. He will not rush to the front and declare himself, simply because he has convictions, but he will have due respect to the old *Kairon Gnothe* of the Greeks. He will seize the right opportunity, and then strike while the iron is hot. He must not rush in where angels dare not tread. He must select wisely the occasion

when and where he will proclaim his convictions. But when that occasion offers itself, he must not hesitate. He must then exercise his courage to the fullest extent, for only in such courageous action will he be able to meet the demands of the age in which he lives.

The present political upheavals throughout this country and the nations of Europe and Asia have been produced by a vigorous advocacy, by a courageous campaign, in which honest conviction has held the supreme place. The preacher, of all men, should be eminently courageous. He is in constant conflict with the agencies of evil, and nothing short of a courage which knows no defeat will suffice to give victory against the tremendous forces which are everywhere arrayed against good, right, and truth.

(4) The twentieth century preacher must be a lover of men as well as a lover of God. I fear that this splendid characteristic is often overlooked in considering what a preacher ought to be. A man cannot, in a personal way, help his fellow-man as he ought to help him unless he is in deep sympathy with the man himself. We can usually find a way to help those we love, and there is never an easy way to help those whom we do not love. The preacher who is not a lover of men will not fit the age in which we live. There never was a time when the whole world was so close together as at present. All the agencies of modern discovery are making toward the unification of mankind, and the preacher who is to become a prominent factor in this welding of the nations and of individual men must himself be in hearty sympathy with men for men's sake, not for what he can get out of them, nor for simply the reason that it is right to help our fellow-men, but rather because the love he has for these men is so overwhelming that he cannot refrain from doing everything he possibly can to better their condition the world over.

Of course he must be a lover of God, but I do not see how it is possible for him to be such a lover if he does not love his fellow-men. If we love not our brother whom we have seen, how can we love God whom we have not seen? In a word, the way to love God is to love our fellow-men. Jesus said to those who asked, "When saw we thee hungry and fed thee, when saw we thee naked and clothed thee?" etc., "As much as ye have done it to the least of these my brethren ye have done it to me." When we serve one another that service is accepted as service done to Christ; when we love one another, in an important sense that is love rendered to God.

As a matter of fact no one can help me very much who does not love me. We all know the difference between the hand of love that administers to us and the hand of hate, which may even offer us apparent kindness simply for selfish purposes. The true preacher of the Gospel cannot administer his holy office if he does not ardently love the people whom he serves. And he must love them for their own sakes, not for his sake; he must love them as he wants to save them; he must not simply want to save them and then love them. However, both of these ought to be true in this case, and will be true if he is worth while as a preacher in the coming age.

(5) He must be a man of affairs. I mean by this that he must have a good business head on him. I do not mean that he must carry with him a slate and pencil and be constantly calculating everything as he would a problem in arithmetic. He need not trouble himself about the mathematical side of the question at all, though it will certainly be no crime if he can repeat the multiplication table. Nor need it be disastrous to his ministry if he can solve a problem in compound proportion; but he must utterly refuse to have anything to do with problems in compound

interest, except where that interest is an accumulation of spiritual forces in his church. In such a case he may become an expert as a spiritual arithmetician.

What I wish to emphasise is the importance of a preacher keeping his own business affairs in good shape, and furthermore to give much attention to conducting everything in his church on good business lines. There is this secular side, if you choose to call it that, but more truly I think it should be called the spiritual side, to every important ministry, and it is a side that cannot be neglected without the loss of spiritual power. In most churches there are special officers, sometimes called deacons, to look after the business affairs of the church; but even where this is the case the preacher should keep himself thoroughly in touch with what these officers are doing, and should, when necessary, be able to guide them in all the affairs which they have under consideration. A good business man may not always be a successful preacher, but a successful preacher must necessarily be a good business man.

(6) The coming preacher must have an open mind to every truth in the universe. The time is past when the highways of truth may be blocked by the interposition of fossilised methods or creeds. We are in an age which invites to free investigation. Everywhere the death knell of despotism, both political and religious, has been sounded. We are standing on the verge of a new age. The spirit of this age is the spirit of freedom. There are no doors now barricaded against the ingress of truth. There are no bastiles to hinder a revolution that means the freedom of men. The old despotisms of Europe are all gone, or else they are just now trembling upon the brink of ruin. Even King Alcohol is being dethroned in many of our own states and cities, and throughout the world he is rapidly losing his iron grasp upon the people.

In the presence of this onward progress of liberty, what can a man do, as a minister of the Gospel, who comes before the world with a message circumscribed by the traditions of the Fathers, or the limitations of human creeds? Such a man will soon find that there is no place for him in the ministry of the twentieth century. This century calls for men of an open mind, men who are willing to hear the voice of truth and follow it whithersoever it leads; men who are prepared to break with all the traditions of the past, however sacred these traditions may be, if such a demand is made upon them in the best interests of the cause for which they plead. This must, indeed, be a prominent characteristic of the preacher of the twentieth century.

(7) The preacher of the twentieth century must be a man who can magnify his calling. He must have a just conception of what this calling is. He must remember that no man can do the work of every man. Every man has his place, and the preacher should know his place and should occupy it without hesitation and without attempting to crowd the places of other men. He will find plenty of work to do within the sphere of his selection. He need not very often go outside of his particular sphere in order to reach the highest point of usefulness. A jack-at-all-trades is likely to be good at none. A man of a single purpose will usually accomplish much more than a man who imagines that he ought to take an active part in everything that is being done. While there are many subordinate spheres lying close to the one which seems to specially bound the preacher's activities, it is not well for him to give too much attention to these outlying districts, but to work well and faithfully in the sphere of labour which he knows is his legitimate field.

Of course I do not mean by this that he is to do nothing

but preach the Gospel; but I do mean that he must preach the Gospel even if he does nothing else; and most probably if he preaches the Gospel faithfully he will find that practically sufficient for taxing all his energies. At any rate, whatever else is left undone he must see to it that the work of saving souls must not be neglected; for, after all, the message of the Gospel is to save rather than to do anything else for men. Other things may follow, but this is the prime consideration in the whole scheme of redemption.

There can be very little doubt that the present age demands a preacher somewhat different from the kind that held sway during even the past century. Scholarly attainments are worth just as much now as they ever were in the history of the church; but these attainments must be used in a somewhat different way. The great problem of the pulpit to-day is, How shall we reach the masses? In many places the people have been alienated from the churches, and consequently the chief effort of the coming ministry must be to restore confidence between the people and the churches, to heal up the breach that has been made and has been widening for the last fifty years. In order that this great work may be accomplished, the minister of the twentieth century must be in hearty sympathy with the people, as well as with the church. Indeed, in an important sense he must be the mediator between the two, and he must use all of his energies to bring about a reconciliation. But he cannot do this by walking on the stilts of a purely academic education. He must step down from his self-conscious exalted position and mingle with the people; he must become one of them, and learn if possible to speak their language without making their grammatical mistakes. He should be cultured, but at the same time he should be strong, and above everything he should under-

stand his real mission and do his work faithfully without the fear of men before his eyes. He should understand that wisdom is worth more than scholarly attainments, and that he who wins souls is wise. In short he must be eminently a soul winner, for unless he is, he must necessarily fail to discharge the functions of his high position, no matter what else he may be or do.

In view of his great responsibilities he dare not confine himself to the limitations of his own parish. Undoubtedly his own parish should have his first and best work. But the man who will succeed as a preacher in the twentieth century must necessarily be in touch with much of the world. He cannot be provincial; he must be cosmopolitan. This is the day when everything is tending to unity. The world is no longer big. Every man in it is practically in touch with every other man. We live on telegraphic lines where distance is virtually reduced to a cipher. We can talk across the ocean even without the wire that was necessary a few years ago. The atmosphere is now contributing to unity, and all effort is in some way or other reaching out after the highest and best. The preacher of the twentieth century must be an echo of the world's united speech, calling for all barriers to give way for the inauguration of the new era of the coming days.

(8) The successful preacher of the twentieth century must be eminently unselfish. It goes without saying that unselfishness should characterise the minister of the Gospel for any century or all the centuries. No man can minister to others who first of all wishes himself to be ministered to. He must rather imitate his Divine Lord in this respect, who came not to be ministered to, but to minister to others. It is therefore impossible to suppose that a minister of the Gospel can in any century be selfish and at the same time make his ministry an eminent success. However, it may

be stated with emphasis that the characteristic of unselfishness must be eminently prominent in the ministry of the twentieth century. As has just been said, the world is no longer large. Its inhabitants now live in constant touch with one another. The dividing line of space has almost been annihilated by recent discoveries and mechanical inventions; and while this in some respects tends to unity, in other respects it tends to selfishness. In the scramble for place and distinction, and, above all, in the intense eagerness for the mastery over all, there is always a strong tendency to make those who are parties to the conflict intensely selfish. Travel itself, though it helps to a broadness in one direction, never fails to cultivate selfishness in another. This may be seen on all the highways of travel, in railcars, steamboats, and steamships. Most men are not satisfied with appropriating one seat in the railway car; they will deliberately appropriate two, and then make it convenient not to see a passenger who is standing in the aisle without any seat at all. The time was when women were excepted in this rule, and usually received the consideration they deserve; but now most men who are in the habit of travelling much are never apparently concerned by the presence of a woman who is without any seat at all, unless it is a concern that they may finally have to give up the extra one they have appropriated for themselves.

This same tendency to selfishness shows itself in every department of human life, and our close touch with one another in the struggle of life does much to intensify this selfish spirit. Consequently I feel sure that the twentieth century minister must set an example in unselfishness of the highest order if he should be able to do much to overcome the tendency of the age. I do not say that he should be indifferent to salary. It often happens that a preacher's

salary is largely the measure of his power to do good. Speaking broadly, he ought to desire a competent salary, and the church he serves ought not to be satisfied with anything short of this. Indeed, if he has the right spirit he will be all the better qualified to serve his church with increasing efficiency if he has a liberal salary at his disposal. There are many things of a benevolent character which a preacher ought to be able to do on his own account, or at least on account of his Master, without asking the church for the means to do it. When he has a little independent margin for benevolent purposes he may use this with which not only to do good to others, but as a means for increasing his influence throughout the community where he lives. A stingy parson is sure to make a lean congregation.

But I do not put this great matter on a *quid pro quo* consideration. The minister must be unselfish just because he cannot be otherwise and at the same time have the spirit of his Divine Master. No man can serve Jesus without serving humanity. The most predominant spirit of the Gospel is otherism or altruism, and yet neither of these words expresses exactly the unselfishness which should characterise the minister of the Gospel. No doubt there is among the ministers of the present day much of what is called altruism, but I fear there is a great lack of that self-forgetfulness, that complete abandonment for the good of others, which seems to me to be so necessary in an age which is characterised by commercialism and an inordinate seeking for power. Nevertheless, I am unable to see at the dawn of this new century that very many are not seeking their own even though we should confine our investigation solely to ministers of the Gospel. As a rule the young minister, as soon as he leaves his college or university to enter upon his work, is looking out for the place that will

pay him the biggest salary. Of course there are exceptions, but I fear the rule is as I have stated it. He is not looking for the place where he can do the most good; where by sacrifices and toils he may benefit those to whom he ministers; but I fear that in any case he is influenced chiefly by what he supposes will be best for himself rather than for those whom he is to serve.

Now all this must be changed in the successful minister of the twentieth century. He must humble himself if he would be exalted; he must be willing to sacrifice every vestige of selfishness in order that he may go down to the lowest and lift them up to the arms of Him who came to seek and to save the lost. It may be that he will not always have to make such sacrifices as I have indicated, but should the necessity be laid upon him, then he must have the courage to do as I have indicated. This is the only kind of minister with respect to this matter who will be a distinct and abiding force in the coming century.

(9) The twentieth century minister must be non-professional. He must not wear on his hat the inscription "Behold a minister of the Gospel!" I doubt not that professionalism in the ministry is one of its greatest hindrances to success. This has been the case in all ages of the church where professionalism has prevailed. This did not prevail in apostolic times. Nor did it prevail in the Patristic Churches, so far as we can determine. While there were always men in the churches who were accepted as "pastors and teachers" during the early period of church history, there is no indication that these pastors and teachers were a profession in the modern use of that term. The church is properly a family, and all its members are brethren, and there is really no special class set apart for ecclesiastical purposes which involves a purely professional life.

But, however this may have been in the ages past, the purely professional minister of the twentieth century cannot possibly do a work worthy the high calling to which he aspires. There is already in many places a distinct break between the people and the ministry, and this is largely owing to the fact that many ministers have ceased to be leaders and commanders of the *people* as Jesus himself was. Almost any profession makes itself objectionable when it is characterised by professionalism. The man who "talks shop" is always a disagreeable factor in a community, but a man who *acts* shop is infinitely worse than the man who talks it. But a minister of the Gospel is the last man in the world who ought either to talk or act shop. He should be natural, free from all cant, and if he cannot be this, he need not wonder if men shun him, and count him a "bore."

(10) The twentieth century preacher must be *manly;* and this characteristic is closely akin to the one we have just considered. He must not be a milksop. He has no right to be a cringing suppliant at the shrine of every popular idol. He has a great calling. He has committed to him a great charge. He stands between the dead and the living. He is the messenger of God bearing good news to the world. He is supposed to have surrendered everything for the great privilege of telling out the "old, old story of Jesus and his love." In his intercourse with his fellowmen he must maintain the dignity which is necessarily associated with so great a charge. He must therefore put away all childish considerations and speak and act as a full-grown man. In a word, he must be manly in the highest degree, for without this manly quality he will be shorn of half his strength, even though he possesses many other qualities for the ministerial calling. Perfect truthfulness is an essential condition to real manliness. He must speak

out of a true heart, and this of itself will dignify every action and intensify every feeling that is noble and God-like.

(11) He must not be afraid of work. Ministers of the Gospel are not killed by work, but by worry. Leave off your worries and do your work. Work always yields the strength of it to the worker. The only way a man can become a great preacher is to preach great preaching. A United States Senator when asked, just after the war, what was the best way to resume specie payments, answered, "The way to resume is to resume." There is a great deal of truth in this statement, and it applies very forcibly to the making of a true minister of the Gospel. I have often been asked what is the best way to preach, and I have usually answered, "The best way to preach is to preach." Let the preacher do the work of the preacher, and he will get the strength of his work. "They that wait on the Lord shall change strength"; that is, they that serve the Lord or do his work shall have the strength of the work they do, and shall change from their own strength to the strength of God, for the doing of God's work assures his strength to do it.

(12) Finally, the twentieth century minister must be a man of insight and vision. He must be able to see things, and things too that are invisible to the ordinary eye. This assures that he will live in touch with the spiritual, or the invisible, world. There are ten thousand things immediately around us that we cannot understand, and the further we go in the direction of the spiritual world the more mysterious do things appear. The minister of the Gospel must have an eye adapted not only to the inner soul, and therefore have a spiritual insight with respect to soul-life, but he must also be able to see quickly and vividly the invisible forces which are all around him,

and that contribute much to make up the sum of his responsibilities.

It is useless to deny the fact that there is a strong tendency at the present time to practically materialise the ministry. With many, in this active, noisy, turbulent age, nothing is seen but the outward. Men in the ministry have little or no conception of anything that is not in some way either a subject of the laboratory or the Stock Exchange. But neither of these is the special sphere of the faithful minister. He needs to commune with the invisible, to see much of God, to come in contact with the secret springs of power, and to live much on the mountain as well as in the valley. Jesus often went apart from his disciples in order to pray and get strength for the conflict which was sure to meet Him down where the people live. The minister of the Gospel must spend much of his time apart from the multitude where he may have visions of his work for the coming days that will inspire him for deeds of noble daring when he enters again the great thoroughfares where souls must be won to his Master. In short, he must be a man of visions, both within and without, for only such a sight will bring him into contact with the living forces which will give him inspiration for his work and also such a love for it as no discouragement can destroy.

Now how shall this preacher be supplied? He is evidently not here as yet, if we reckon with a composite picture of the ministry of the present day. I am glad to believe that many of the men who now occupy the pulpits of the land fairly represent the picture I have drawn in its most important characteristics; but there are so many still who have not reached the high ideal which has been sketched that when these are added, so as to obtain a general result, the ministry, as a whole, has not yet reached the high-water mark which has been indicated. Nor is the supply suffi-

cient to meet the demands of the age, even if all were equally well equipped for the service which has to be rendered. Again we ask the question, How can this necessary ministry be supplied?

(1) The church itself must furnish the material, and should also do some of the training. This being true, every church in the land should regard itself as a nursery for the coming ministry. The time was when this was much more the case than it now is. Some way or other the churches seem to have dropped out of the ministerial problem. Many of these no longer take any interest in the encouragement of young men who give promise of usefulness in the ministry. If a young man wishes to enter the ministry of his own initiative, perhaps no one will seriously object; but, as a rule, no one very earnestly encourages him to do so. For the most part those who enter the ministry have to assume the whole responsibility for their act, and very seldom does the church know anything about what they are doing, and even if his action is known to the church, no one seems to have any interest in the matter at all. Now all this must be changed if we are to have a ministry for the coming days equal to the requirements of the case.

(2) All young men seeking to enter the ministry should receive their primary instructions in regard to the work for which they are equipping themselves from the respective pastors of the churches where their membership is. This lays a special duty upon pastors which they dare not neglect. Indeed, it is one of the very things that every faithful pastor must be careful to do. Paul, in writing his letter to Timothy, not only exhorts him to "hold fast the pattern of sound words" which he had received from the Apostle, but he urges Timothy also to commit the things which he had heard from the Apostle "to faithful men

who shall be able to teach others also." Thus it will be seen that there is, according to divine authority, a sort of succession in the ministerial calling. The pastor must not only be able to preach the Gospel himself faithfully, but he should by all legitimate means strive to secure competent men in his own church to whom can be committed this gracious Gospel message when the pastor himself has ceased from his labours. As a matter of fact there are many things which a preacher ought to learn which can be taught effectually only by a preacher, and a preacher too of wide and varied experience; and this is so much the case that our colleges, where young men are trained for the ministry, should use their wisest, ablest, and most experienced old men for the purpose of instructing the young men who are preparing for the ministry.

(3) This brings us to the last source of supply, viz., our colleges. Nor is it quite proper to say that these colleges do really supply us with ministers. From one point of view they may be regarded as doing this; but we have already seen that the churches and pastors must really be the true source of supply. The colleges can only help to fit these young men for their important work.

I have already said so much about this matter that I need do little more than refer to it now. When a young man has been selected by his church and trained by his pastor to do some ministerial work at home, it may then be well for him to take a course of instruction in a college specially appointed for ministerial training; and if this training is in harmony with the best equipment for preaching service, then undoubtedly it ought to have a good influence in preparing the young minister for his work.

In closing what I have to say with respect to the problems which have been under consideration, it is only needful to emphasise the great importance of the position which is

offered to the right kind of a minister in the coming days of the new century. Sometimes we hear it suggested that the press is rapidly taking the place of the pulpit, and consequently the time may not be long before preaching may be dispensed with entirely. Those who talk this way are simply dreaming. They have no wide-awake conception of the age in which they live. The press is undoubtedly a powerful factor, and it ought to be much more powerful for good than it is. But even if its power for good was quadrupled, it would still be far behind the pulpit in moving men to action, in striking down the powers of evil, and in helping men to a higher and better life. The press has no living voice. It speaks to the eye. It is a sign of political, social, and religious progress, and it helps in a certain degree to move on this progress. But it lacks the close contact with the ear through which alone the faith of mankind is moved; for as a matter of fact we walk by faith and not by sight, and this "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." The preacher is therefore the proclaimer of this Word, and this Word is the producer of faith, and this faith overcomes the world.

THE END

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